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THE TIMES

50p

No. 66,066

SATURDAY DECEMBER 6 1997

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HAPPY HUNTING AT HIGHGROVE
WEEKEND joins the pack

VIVAT VERSACE at the Met
MAGAZINE

BATTLE OF THE DINOSAURS
McEnroe v Borg
SPORT

go
The great new comic

THE TIMES FOR ONLY 10P EVERY MONDAY

Kidnapper chased through hospital

Newborn baby snatched from mother's side

Adam Fresco and Kathryn Knight

- ☐ **9.50am:** 6lb.15 oz Karli born by Caesarean section
- ☐ **10.15am:** Mother Tanya and baby brought back to Willow Ward
- ☐ **12.40pm:** Father leaves room to phone relatives
- ☐ **12.50pm:** Baby abducted

A THREE-HOUR old baby was snatched from her cot at her sleeping mother's side in a modern hospital maternity ward yesterday by a woman who managed to evade its elaborate security system.

The 6lb 15oz girl, Karli, was born by caesarian section at 9.50am and her father, Karl Hawthorne, was telephoning relatives to break the news when she was snatched from Basildon General Hospital, Essex at 12.50pm.

Tanya Hawthorne was in the bed closest to the entrance of the Willow Ward and a mother occupying a bed a few feet away saw the abductor and ran to a nearby nurses' station to raise the alarm.

Nurses chased the woman, described as blonde and aged 25-30, through the hospital but were unable to catch her. She was driven away in a black Renault Laguna by a man at high speed on the wrong side of the road.

Police cordoned off the area around the building, a helicopter searched overhead and officers with tracker dogs scoured the grounds but no trace of the car or the abductors was found. Detectives studied video tape from closed circuit television cameras but it is believed the woman was able to enter the maternity ward because closed circuit cameras were not being monitored at the time.

Staff reported seeing a woman fitting the abductor's description — 5ft 6in, wearing a three-quarter length beige coat — acting suspiciously around the entrance to the maternity ward earlier in the day. At one stage she had been shown out of the building.

Basildon Hospital spent £100,000 on security for the maternity ward when it was built four years ago but it did not electronically tag babies. Security was tightened at hospitals after the abduction of baby Alexandra Griffiths, from from St Thomas's Hospital, London, in 1990, and Abbie Humphries, from Nottingham's Queen Elizabeth Medical Centre in 1994. Both babies were found unharmed.

Doctors expressed their concern for Karli because she was so young and had not been fed since she was born. Christopher Welch, clinical director of maternity and paediatrics, said: "Without proper food and fluids the blood sugar will drop and this will affect the baby's brain functions. The baby could become dehydrated and we are worried about brain damage. Night is falling and it is getting cold so it is now becoming critical that we find her."

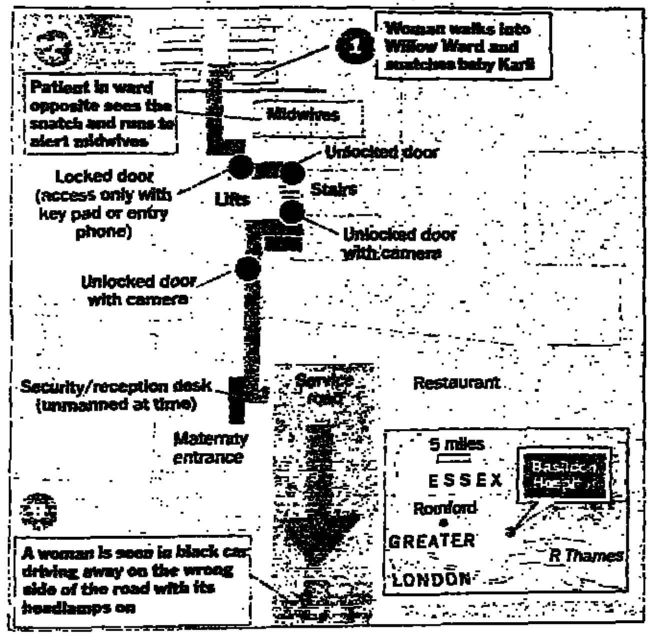
Answering criticisms that the unit was not fully equipped to monitor the busy activity of a maternity area, Mr Welch said: "The way we organise security is that we use staff as security. This lady and baby were almost caught. They were seen leaving and were chased by staff who tried to catch her, but she was too fast."

Although the baby-snatcher had to go through three doors with cameras trained on them before reaching the ward, as there was no one watching the screens by the unit's entrance no alarm was raised.

This falls short of the NHS Executive guidelines which says staff should monitor all those entering and leaving the unit. The last door on to the ward had a numeric lock and intercom system but it is believed the abductor slipped through as somebody walked out.

Mrs Hawthrone was taken from the maternity ward to a seperate part of the hospital to recover. The couple — who are not married but who both use the surname Hawthorne — have a four-year-old boy and a nine-year-old girl.

Detective Superintendent David Bright said: "The mother and father and the family are distraught as are the members of the hospital. We need urgently to trace the baby, it has not been fed since it was born."


1
Woman walks into Willow Ward and snatches baby Karli
Patient in ward opposite sees the snatch and runs to alert midwives
Midwives
Unlocked door
Locked door (access only with key pad or entry phone)
Lifts
Stairs
Unlocked door with camera
Unlocked door with camera
Security/reception desk (unmanned at time)
Service road
Restaurant
Maternity entrance
5 miles
ESSEX
Basildon Hospital
Romford
GREATER LONDON
R Thames
A woman is seen in black car driving away on the wrong side of the road with its headlamps on

Security failure, page 2

SPENCER BACK IN BRITAIN

Earl Spencer and his son Louis arriving at Heathrow yesterday. Lord Spencer, granted a divorce in South Africa this week, was accompanied by all four children (PHOTOGRAPH: PA)

Robinson to face watchdog inquiry over offshore trust

By Andrew Pierce, Political Correspondent

THE Parliamentary standards watchdog is to investigate whether Geoffrey Robinson, the Paymaster General, should have declared a multimillion-pound offshore trust in the Commons Register of Members' Interests.

The disclosure will add to the pressure on Mr Robinson, the wealthiest member of the Government, to make a more detailed statement about his complex business affairs.

Peter Lilley, the Shadow Chancellor, wrote to Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, after the disclosure that the Orion Trust had bought £3 million of shares in TransTec, the engineering company Mr Robinson founded 16 years ago, since he became a Treasury minister.

Robert Sheldon, the Labour chairman of the Commons Standards and Privileges Committee said yesterday: "Sir Gordon Downey will make a detailed analysis of the complaint and report back to my committee. He will make a recommendation on whether we should mount a full inquiry or not. I will take no view on the complaint until he has reported to the committee."

The prospect of a full-scale investigation will dismay the Labour leadership, which has sought unsuccessfully to draw a line under the affair since details of the offshore trust became known at the weekend.

TransTec shares worth more than £12 million, to which Mr Robinson was entitled to subscribe under a massive rights issue, are held in the trust, where any gains they generate will be shielded from tax. Labour is committed to the abolition of offshore trusts.

In a statement last weekend Mr Robinson said he had not publicised the trust, which was set up for him by a wealthy friend the late Madame Joska Bourgeois, on the advice of his solicitors and Sir Terence Burns, the Treasury Permanent Secretary.

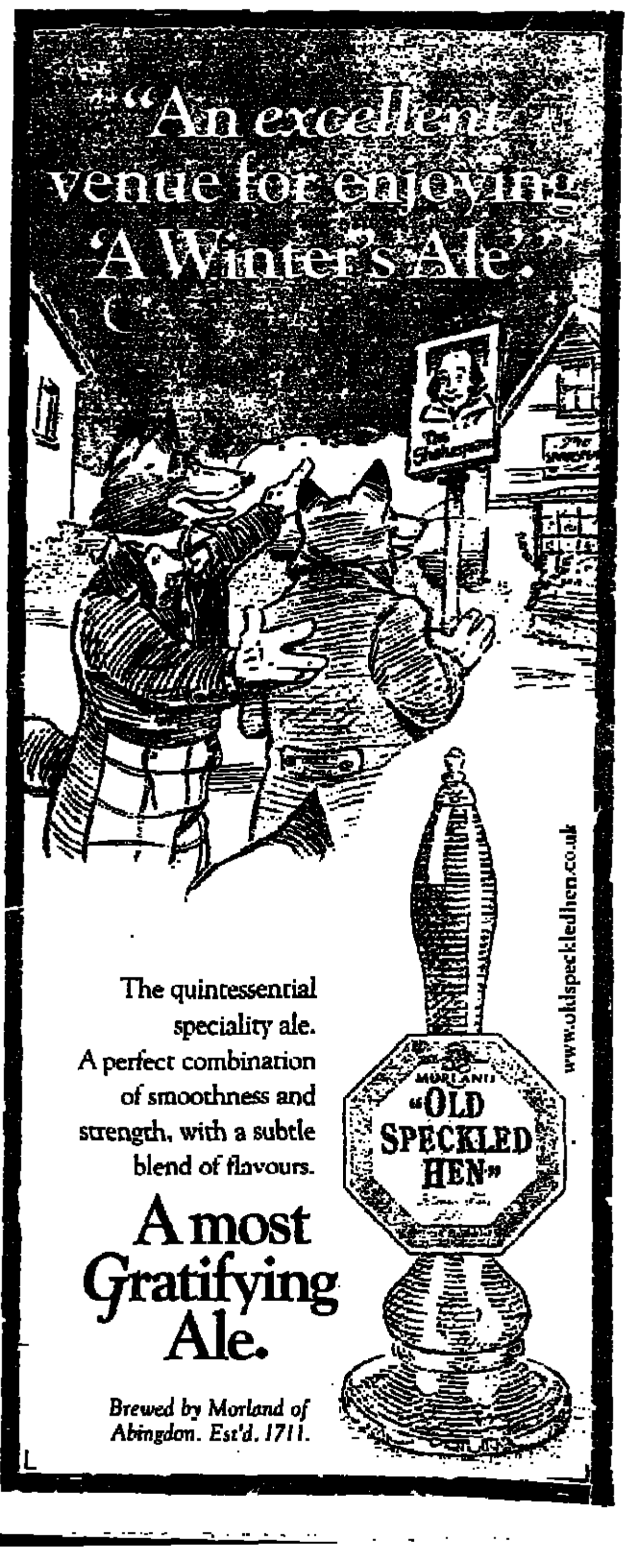
The Tories are pressing Sir Terence to say whether he knew about the post-election shares purchase by the trust in Mr Robinson's company when he gave the advice.

Mr Robinson was undaunted by the latest twist. In a statement issued by the Treasury last night he said: "I made a full statement last Saturday. I have nothing further to add."

One minister said: "Geoffrey has the full support of the Prime Minister and the Chancellor. The Tories are just muck spreading."

The Robinson case, page 4
Letters, page 23

Robinson: pressure to make detailed statement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Life for RAF man who killed wife

By Michael Horsnell

A SENIOR RAF officer who murdered his wife over his infatuation with a young Serbian interpreter was sentenced to life imprisonment yesterday.

Squadron Leader Nicholas Tucker, 46, who is based at RAF Honington, Suffolk, looked stunned as the 10-2 majority verdict was delivered after a 13-day hearing at Norwich Crown Court. The jury deliberated for seven hours.

Mr Justice Gage told him that he had been convicted of a "planned, callous and coolly-executed act".

The judge said he had no doubt that Tucker was "besotted" with interpreter Dijana Dudukovic, 21, and this was' the motivation for the murder of his wife, Carol.

Tucker, an RAF Regiment officer for 27 years, who had seen service in the Northern Ireland and the Gulf War, had become involved with Miss Dudukovic while serving with the United Nations in the former Yugoslavia. He strangled then drowned Mrs Tucker in the River Lark at Lackford, Suffolk, in July 1995 before faking a car crash in an attempt to cover his tracks, the court was told.

Carol Tucker's brother said last night that he thought that justice had been done. Michael Burch, 62, a retired RAF squadron leader who lives in Oswestry, Shropshire, said: "I think Nick has got what he deserved. But it's very difficult to know what to say about him. The whole family is shocked."

Mr Burch said he had spoken to Tucker's daughter Vanessa, 22, who is married and lives in Auckland, New Zealand, and his son James, 18, who is currently away at school. He said: "I think they would have been shocked whatever verdict there had been," he added. "I think what has happened is just beginning to sink in."

Detective Inspector Michael Bier, who led the inquiry, said: "Tucker is a deceitful individual who planned the murder of his wife. Carol was a devoted wife and mother, supportive and loyal. Her relatives now have an answer to what happened on that fatal night."

Fool for love, page 3

THE SATURDAY TIMES

The best for business, best for personal finance, best for books

BUSINESS

Today the best City pages profile the computer nerd millionaires
Starting Page 26
with share prices

WEEKEND MONEY

The award-winning team on how to make the best of the end of PEPs and TESSAs and the arrival of Isas
In section 2
with unit trust prices

metro

Christmas books issue

go

The great new comic

FULL INDEX Back Page

Christmas message? A load of rubbish

TO ME IT LACKS PRESENTS
TATE
ROBERT THOMPSON

**By Dalya Alberge
Arts Correspondent**

AN ARTIST commissioned to create the annual Christmas tree for the Tate Gallery in London has decided to break with tradition by displaying only a large bin filled to the brim with rubbish.

Not any old rubbish, though. There is a seasonal theme — offerings of Christmas leftovers: empty bottles, drink cans, used Christmas paper, broken decorations, the packaging from toys, gifts or food products and dead or broken Christmas trees. The work's title? *Christmas Tree 1997.*

The installation is the work of Michael Landy, 34, an artist at the height of the contemporary art tree. His critically-acclaimed work includes displaying shopping-trolleys, market stalls and bread trays in galleries. One critic linked his work to the social and political satire of Hogarth and Swift. Others have demonstrated a less admiring response: it is said that his 1996 garbage-can installation at a central London gallery was thrown out by the night cleaners.

With *Christmas Tree 1997*, according to the Tate, he wanted to show "the aftermath of Christmas . . . to draw attention to the conspicuous consumption which so often surrounds the festive season".

TODAY IN THE TIMES

'Nannycam spy cameras have been flying off the shelves since Woodward was convicted'

James Bone's New York Diary
Page 12

'I am neither high-brow nor low-brow. I will listen to anything'

Valerie Grove meets Gerald Kaufman
Page 21

'Loyalty between women is a bigger taboo than lesbianism'

Roger Boyes meets Shere Hite
Page 19

How security failed mother and baby

Network of cameras was rendered useless because no one watched the screens, writes **Kathryn Knight**

Basildon Hospital chief executive Sue Jennings and a consultant display a gown similar to the one that the abducted baby was wearing

THE woman who stole baby Karli passed dozens of nursing staff and bypassed a security door to make her way into the recovery rooms in Willow ward, where she took the sleeping child from the first bed that she came to.

Basildon Hospital installed 13 security cameras in their purpose-built maternity unit after a review of security following the abduction of Abbie Humphries in Birmingham four years ago.

The cameras, part of equipment costing £100,000, were the type of equipment recommended in security guidelines issued by the NHS Executive 18 months ago. They cover the main doors and corridors leading to the recovery rooms, but were of no use because no staff were monitoring the television cameras when the abductor entered.

The abductor went through three doors with cameras trained on them before reaching the ward. To enter the maternity unit, the abductor is thought to have entered the main doors, past a welcome desk which is usually staffed by volunteers but yesterday was unmanned. From there she would turn right through a set of unsecured doors leading down a corridor.

From there left through another set of doors, again unsecured, up a set of stairs to the first floor. At the top are more doors leading towards Willow ward. Access is only granted via an intercom but it is believed the woman bypassed this by slipping through as someone else made their exit. Video cameras are positioned on this door and pictures are relayed to the welcome desk.

After walking another 30 yards through three more corridors past side wards and nursing rooms, including the midwives' room, the woman arrived at the four-bed recovery bay where Karli and her mother lay resting.

Karli and her mother lay on the first bed on the right, leading police to believe that the abduction was opportunist. A woman 10ft away on the left of the bay witnessed the abduction and ran 12ft past the mother's bed to the nursing station to raise the alarm. But it was too late. While midwives gave chase, the abductor fled from the ward into a waiting black Renault Laguna.

After the abduction of baby Abbie, it was decided not to tag newborn babies in the unit because doctors felt they could be tampered with and rendered useless. Instead they rely heavily on the vigilance of nursing staff and also issue parents with written instructions not to leave their babies alone at any time.

Sue Jennings, chief executive at the hospital, said there would be a full security review. "There was a full security review after the abduction of baby Humphries and specific instructions were left with parents not to let their children go with anyone unless they knew them," she said. "It's always easy to do more — clearly if a baby has been taken then the hospital needs to have a further review of its security."

NHS Executive guidelines say that "a culture needs to be developed and continually reinforced within the maternity unit to ensure that staff, parents and visitors share a commitment to maintaining a secure envrironment. This will rely on an effective feedback system and security training for staff ... It is vital that parents, visitors and staff are aware of the importance of security measures, to report any suspicious behaviour to challenge unidentified people and to never leave infants unattended."

Under the guidelines, staff monitoring should be carried out at the point of entrance and exit of the unit. A system for all visitors to check in at a nurses station or reception point is recommended. Tagging of babies is not considered essential and in this case would have made no difference since the alarm was raised immediately by the mother in an adjacent bed.

The guidelines recommend that infants should be in view of their parents, however because the mother in the case was recovering from an anaesthetic she was not alert and it was fortunate that the other woman realised what was happening and was quick to raise the alarm.

The guidelines also say that staff should be aware of all visitors on the ward and should be trained to raise their awareness of suspicious behaviour. If a baby is abducted, the guidelines say that the ward should be closed and police called.

Most infants found unhurt

By Adrian Lee

BETWEEN 30 and 40 babies are snatched each year — the majority taken from the street — but most are recovered almost immediately.

According to the Portia Trust, which helps women who take babies, fewer than 20 infants have been missing for more than a few hours in the last 30 years. Most were recovered, unharmed, within a week. The longest absence was six months.

In 1990 Alexandra Griffiths was abducted from St Thomas's Hospital, in London, when 36 hours old. After a 16-day hunt Janet Griffiths, 33, a nurse, but no relation to the baby, was caught and sent to a mental hospital where she spent four months. She died from cancer three years ago.

Abbie Humphries was five hours old when she was snatched from the Queen Elizabeth Medical Centre in Nottingham in 1994. She was reunited with her parents, Karen and Roger, after a 15-day search.

Julie Kelley, 22, took the baby to fulfil a phantom pregnancy she had staged to win back her boyfriend, a court was told. She was put on probation for three years and ordered to have treatment for a personality disorder. Two babies snatched in 1994, one from University College Hospital, London, and one from Bath's Royal United Hospital, were recovered unharmed.

Labour lawyers ready to join revolt on legal aid

By Frances Gibb, legal correspondent

LEADING figures in Labour's legal establishment are preparing to revolt over government plans to abolish civil legal aid.

The Society of Labour Lawyers meets today to vote on a motion that would place it in line with all other groups opposed to the policy, including the Law Society, the Bar and consumer organisations.

The 1,000-strong society has already written privately to Lord Irvine of Lairg, the Lord Chancellor — who is one of its presidents — expressing concern about the proposals. Today their annual general meeting is expected to endorse a motion calling on the Government not to withdraw legal aid unless people would be better off under alternative proposals.

They also want further research into "no win, no fee" arrangements, which the goverment plans to take the place of most civil legal aid, in recognition of the "serious and widespread concern" that this must be done to show they benefit consumers.

In their letter earlier this month to Lord Irvine the lawyers said: "Ours is not the reaction of self-interested practitioners, for you will know that those involved in our organisation are primarily concerned with legal matters from the perspective of achieving social justice and a fair and balanced society, while recognising the need for radical and fresh approaches to meet today's challenges."

The lawyers argue that "no win, no fee" work will bar the poor from access to justice. People will need insurance to cover them against the other side's costs if they lose and may forfeit up to 25 per cent of their damages if they win, the lawyers say.

Legal threat to tobacco ads deal

By Polly Newton, political reporter

TOBACCO manufacturers yesterday threatened legal action over the European Union agreement that will ban them from advertising.

They are angry about the deal secured on Thursday night in Brussels to phase out all tobacco advertising and sponsorship by October 2006. Billboard and cinema advertisements will be illegal within three years, and those in newspapers and magazines will be outlawed a year later. Sponsorship of sport and cultural events must end by October 2005, with a further year's grace for "world events" such as Formula One grand prix.

Tessa Jowell, the Public Health Minister, said the deal constituted a victory for the Government. "We have got the protection we were seeking and we have got the flexibility for Formula One and we are delighted," she said. She had originally sought a permanent exemption for Formula One, but indicated earlier this week that she was prepared to compromise.

Gareth Davis, the chief executive of Imperial Tobacco, said the company believed that the EU might have exceeded its legal powers. "It is an ill-advised decision, because the ban will not have the intended effect of reducing consumption but will merely stifle our ability to compete for market share," he said. "Fifteen million adults choose to smoke and tobacco is a legal product. It seems quite wrong that manufacturers should be banned from communicating with their customers."

He said the firm was also concerned for small British-based sports such as angling, darts and clay pigeon shooting, which depended on tobacco sponsorship but would suffer "because no one at the meeting bothered to champion their cause".

A spokesman for the Tobacco Manufacturers Association said the flexibility allowed to member states in implementing the ban could compromise EU rules. He claimed that it was a "blatant abuse" of single market regulations. The manufacturers might also claim that the ban infringes their right to freedom of expression. A Downing Street spokesman said the Government had no reason to believe the directive was not legally sound.

Earlier, David Hinchliffe, Labour chairman of the Commons Health Select Committee, welcomed the directive, but voiced disappointment that the Formula One lobby had in effect "got their way in Europe". He told BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme: "This somewhat undermines the efforts made by other sports to move away from tobacco advertising. I hope, even at this late stage, that efforts will be made to tighten up the timescale."

Sandy Macara, chairman of the British Medical Association, said Ms Jowell appeared to have secured the best deal possible in the circumstances although it was a pity that it would take so long for the ban to come into force.

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Publishers halt sale of letters by Philip Larkin

By Dalya Alberge, arts correspondent

THE publishers of Philip Larkin's poetry have taken legal action to stop a dealer selling a collection of up to 30 letters.

Faber & Faber yesterday served a writ against R A Gekoski, a London dealer in rare books and manuscripts. They had learnt from *The Times* on Thursday that he was offering the letters for £28,000.

The correspondence was between Larkin, the epitome of the tortured poet, and Charles Monteith, chairman of Faber between 1977 and 1981, and a senior editorial consultant until his death. They include a "wicked" parody of Ted Hughes. If, as Faber believes, it is the published example, it is an important document and should never have left their Bloomsbury archives.

Monteith, remembered as a quintessential member of the Establishment, died in 1995. He is believed to have sold the letters in 1992 to Dr Gekoski. Among the documents is a note in which Monteith states that they were his property, not Faber's.

Matthew Evans, chairman of Faber & Faber, said: "We believe some of the correspondence being sold is the property of Faber & Faber. We went round to chambers this morning to see a counsel who got an injunction restraining Dr Gekoski from selling them until further notice. What we don't know is exactly what's there."

The importance of such letters lies in that they give added insight into an intensely private man. After his death in 1985, Larkin's 30 volumes of diaries were destroyed, at his request.

Dr Gekoski, who is based in Bloomsbury, said: "I bought the letters from Mr Monteith with his written assurance that he was the owner of the letters. I always do this. He was a former chairman of Faber & Faber and a man of the highest integrity. I have now no reason whatsoever to question his judgment.

"The material at issue was sold at that time to an American collector and was recently repurchased from an American dealer by ourselves." He added: "I feel that in repurchasing this material, we have done nothing either illegal or immoral and we have the fullest confidence that the matter will be resolved satisfactorily."

Larkin: intensely private man

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He murdered his wife of 23 years ... for a 23-year-old woman who had already lost interest in him

Squadron leader was a fool for love

By Michael Horsnell

NICHOLAS TUCKER thought that he could fool the police and the insurance companies. In the end, he was a fool for love.

Even as he killed his wife of 23 years in a faked car accident, his 23-year-old Serbian mistress had lost interest in him. She turned down his entreaties to join him in England and married a boyfriend within eight months of Carol Tucker's death.

The squadron leader, who police believe to be the highest ranking officer convicted of murder, had also stood to benefit from £300,000 of insurance policies taken out during a 12-year period, although the jury was not told of any financial motive.

However, he miscalculated here too. A clause in the largest policy, for £171,000 taken out with Sun Alliance in 1990 for death in a road accident, stipulated that one of the couple had to die inside the vehicle. Tucker, who throttled his 15-stone wife before crashing, removed her unconscious body from the car before placing her face down in the river, where she drowned.

Three days after the death of his wife, Tucker, 46, made a one-word entry in his diary. It read: "Insurance?" It was discovered at his home in the officers' quarters at RAF Honington. Tucker claimed it was a reminder to do with getting his car repaired.

Carol and Nicholas Tucker on their wedding day

Police made the allegations of a financial motive at committal proceedings last year, but the Crown Prosecution Service decided not to put the insurance evidence before jury, relying instead on the sexual motive.

The RAF officer, whom police believe feigned mental illness for a month upon his arrest to prevent their interviewing him while he concocted a defence, was convicted two and a half years after the killing. He bit his lip and looked grimly down as the jury announced its 10-2 majority.

He met his lover, Dijana Dudokovic, when she was assigned to him as an interpreter during a six-month tour of duty as a UN military observer in Bosnia. A new girlfriend, Jenny Peacock, 46, stood by him throughout his trial. The Ministry of Defence said last night that Tucker would be formally "required to leave the services" and faces the loss of pension rights.

Mr Justice Gage told him yesterday: "You drove your car off the road into a river, then extricated your wife and drowned her. To those who came upon the scene, you feigned unconsciousness and pretended you did not know how she had died.

"This was a planned, callous and coolly executed act. I take the view that your subsequent mental breakdown was brought on by feelings of guilt and remorse."

The jury of seven women and five men heard that he had been unable to explain how blobs of his blood from three small unexplained cuts to his forehead were found on his wife's side of the dashboard, and on the outside door on the passenger side.

Within hours of the crash, traffic officers were already suspicious of his account that his wife had grabbed the steering wheel when she saw deer on the road ahead, and that he had swerved into the river at Larkford Bridge, Suffolk. The tyre patterns indicated the car had not swerved but been driven into the river, and the vehicle was scarcely damaged.

The verdict was relayed to Mrs Tucker's family in Oswestry, where her sister-in-law Margaret Burch said: "We are still trying to take it in. It will take us quite a little time." David Shipman, Tucker's solicitor, said his client was devastated and an appeal was planned.

SIMON WALKER

Dijana Dudokovic with her husband. She said: "I made no promises"

Temptress who led to officer's downfall

THE GIRLFRIEND

By Michael Horsnell and Michael Evans

THE *femme fatale* who captivated Tucker refused to give evidence at his trial after recoiling from allegations against her that ranged from prostitution to espionage.

Dijana Dudokovic, who has married since her affair with the RAF officer, resisted police requests to enter the witness box where she feared her reputation would be assailed.

The alluring Serbian translator, 23, who served with the UN peacekeeping force in Bosnia, was once under suspicion as a spy for the Serbs, but the allegation was dropped. In court, witnesses portrayed her as a manipulative woman who had several affairs with UN officers and was prepared to "prostitute herself" with anyone she thought might secure her advancement.

Miss Dudokovic, a former English student at Belgrade University who spent nights with Tucker, 46, at the RAF Club in Piccadilly, yesterday rejected her portrayal as a Mata Hari figure in the Yugoslavian conflict.

From her flat in Zurich, Switzerland, she said: "Everything that has been said about me is a disgrace. We did not sleep together. I was already engaged when I met him. We were just friends."

Eight months after Tucker's tour of duty ended in July 1995, she had married her long-term boyfriend Nenad Perovanovic, after obtaining a visa allowing her Swiss residence. This was despite the entreaties of Tucker who had contacted both the Immigration Advisory Service and the Refugee Legal Centre in London a month after his wife's death for advice on obtaining asylum for her.

Miss Dudokovic said: "Nick may have been infatuated with me but I made no promises."

Tucker wrote to Miss Dudokovic after the death of his wife protesting his love for her. She tore up his letter and burnt it.

Larger than life figure who was born into Service life

THE WIFE

CAROL TUCKER, the officer's 15st wife and mother of their two children, was the cheerful, caring, churchgoing product of a Service family.

The daughter of Squadron Leader Reginald Burch, who was serving during the war as a flying instructor at the RAF College, Cranwell, Lincolnshire, when she was born, Carol Tucker spent her life moving from base to base.

Mrs Tucker, who at 52 was eight years her husband's senior, is remembered as a "bubbly, helpful, friendly person" by her friends.

Yesterday her brother, retired Squadron Leader Michael Burch said: "She was big in every way. She was an extrovert. She would breeze into a room as the life and soul of the party. It was Nick who was the quiet one. I miss her badly. We grew up very close together.

"She was an ideal Service wife. My mother having been married to a Serviceman, the ideas that Carol inherited may have been a bit old-fashioned. She was a bit of a mother hen. But the younger wives would always come to her for advice."

Squadron Leader Burch, 62, from Oswestry, Shropshire, said his sister travelled widely with her husband after meeting him in Germany where she worked for the Malcolm Clubs — "a sort of upmarket Naafi". He added: "I last saw her about two months before she died when she visited us briefly. As far as I knew the marriage was all right. But you don't know what goes on behind the front door. They had never given us any cause for concern. But it wasn't in her nature to say anything if something was wrong. She would keep a stiff upper lip."

Carol Tucker is buried in a double grave in the village churchyard at Honington, Suffolk, apparently chosen by her husband. "Nick said there would always be people to look after her there," said Squadron Leader Burch. "But some members of the family expressed the view that we would have preferred her to be taken home to Cheshire."

One thing her brother cannot understand was the defence evidence that his sister had a water phobia and drowned in the River Lark when she panicked in the dark. Mr Burch said: "I am surprised to hear of it. She was a good swimmer."

Mrs Tucker was a regular worshipper at St Michael's, RAF Honington, where the Rev Leigh Spicer was the family's neighbour. He said: "She was a fairly strong personality, quite robust and strong. Anger would have been one of her reactions if she had known that Nick was having an affair. My feeling at the time was that if she had known, she would probably have told Nick he was a silly boy and would have talked it through with him."

Wendy Yarnold, the wife of a Serviceman and Carol's best friend, said: "She was a very large person in every sense — vivacious, bright, full of fun, full of humour; just a delightful person. It's a very difficult life for the wives. The men have their careers and the wives bear the brunt. Carol was a good wife."

Ian Woodward, a manager at Northgate Motors, in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, where Mrs Tucker worked, said that she left the company on the morning of her death in order to accompany her husband to his new posting to RAF Innsworth, Gloucestershire.

"One day we were saying goodbye to her and giving her farewell presents, the next day we heard she had been killed. We couldn't believe it. She had such a nice disposition."

Rise and fall of an RAF high-flyer

THE HUSBAND

NICHOLAS TUCKER met his wife in Germany — his first posting after being commissioned into the RAF Regiment in 1970 — where she worked for the Naafi-style Malcolm Clubs for servicemen.

They married in 1974, had two children, Vanessa, now 22, and James, 18, and travelled much of the world with the RAF, which he had joined as a cadet after leaving Wilmslow Grammar School. He served in Northern Ireland, Cyprus and Belize before being promoted to squadron leader in 1984 and became an expert in nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) defence.

Tucker, who was said to be on course for promotion to Wing Commander, helped supervise the move of the regiment's training base from RAF Catterick, North Yorkshire, to RAF Honington where he served as deputy chief instructor until his arrest. He returned from the Gulf in 1991, where he served at Dahran and Riyadh as NBC advisor to the force commander in the build-up to the Gulf War. His marriage was sound but he claimed to have become impotent.

He absorbed himself in researching military history and recently had his first book *In Adversity* — the history of honours and awards made to members of the RAF Regiment — published by Jade Publishing. He had delivered the manuscript on a second book. When he was not writing he devoted himself to his collection of medals and bayonets, and to his interest in family genealogy.

The posting to RAF Honington had been due to finish in December 1994 but, because Vanessa was still a student at the West Suffolk College, a move would have been inconvenient for the family.

He overcame the problem of deferring their departure from Suffolk by applying for a six-month tour of duty in the former Yugoslavia as a United Nations military observer from January 1995. It was there that his passions were reignited by his Serbian translator, Dijana Dudokovic.

The normally methodical officer was said to have become her "lap dog", neglecting his duties to the detriment of the UN peace keeping force in Bosnia. He would comandeer personnel carriers to take her shopping in Zagreb when he should have been on patrol, escort her to "smoochy" parties where he fetched and carried the food and drinks, give her time off whenever she wanted, fix the rotas so they could be together, and run errands for her family.

Tucker had applied for a two month extension to his tour of duty in Bosnia to be with Dijana, but, when this was turned down he returned to RAF Honington on July 15, 1995. Six days later he took his wife out to dinner at the Red Lion pub at Icklingham, Suffolk — "to talk things over". She never returned.

Lawyer jailed for drink-drive lie

By Peter Foster

A LAWYER who lied to protect her policeman boyfriend from a drink-driving charge was jailed at the Old Bailey yesterday for perverting the course of justice.

Penelope Schofield, 35, who had worked for the Crown Prosecution Service, was led sobbing from the dock after she was sentenced to three months. Detective Constable Nigel Phillips was jailed for 16 months for his part in their attempted deception.

The court had earlier been told that the couple spun a web of deceit after Phillips, 31, had an accident as he drove home from a CID Christmas party last year when he was three times over the legal limit. On the way back to the cottage in Hampshire he shared with Schofield, he struck the kerb and had a puncture. In a panic, he coaxed the Range Rover into the nearby Bitterne police station, where he was based.

After being breathalysed and cautioned by police at the station, Phillips made several calls to his girlfriend in which he later admitted asking her to say she had been driving when the accident happened.

Richard Lissack, QC, for Schofield, said that a "moment of madness" had ruined his client's life. "She has lost her name, her position in society and her career. She will almost certainly be struck off by the Law Society, adding to the humiliation she has already heaped upon her head."

Schofield: undone by a "moment of madness"

For Phillips, Michael Egan, QC, said his client had served the police with distinction for almost ten years. His actions had been out of character.

As he passed sentence, Sir Lawrence Verney, the Recorder of London, said: "The interest of the public makes it essential that I pass a prison sentence. That those who offend are deeply involved in the process of public justice makes this even more serious."

Call to end court ordeal of women

By A Correspondent

A JUDGE called for a change in the law yesterday as he passed a 16-year jail sentence on a knife-wielding rapist who was able to "intimidate and humiliate" his victims as he cross-examined them at length in the witness box.

Judge Timothy Pontius said there was "understandable public concern" that alleged sexual offenders were allowed a "virtually unfettered right" to question those they were said to have degraded.

The 44-year-old man he was sentencing, who cannot be named for legal reasons, dismissed three legal teams before deciding to represent himself during his three-week-long trail at Knightsbridge Crown Court. The former mechanic made his victims repeat every intimate detail of their ordeals.

He showed no emotion as the judge spoke of his "mercurial and wholly unpredictable temperament" and said the public in general, and women in particular, needed to be protected from him. "You subjected your victims to merciless cross-examination clearly designed to intimidate and humiliate," the judge said. The judge then appeared to refer to the way that the man had accused the women he attacked of flirting with him, "wanting it" and "enjoying" what had happened to them. "In the course of questioning them you made the most outrageous and repulsive suggestions to both witnesses. Those suggestions and indeed the whole of your evidence were indeed very swiftly and rightly rejected unanimously by the jury."

The judge said: "The offences in June and September of last year both involved protracted and repeated sexual violence of a horrifying degree, sexual humiliation, degradation and domination at your hands."

The court heard that the first victim, a widow of 38, had arrived in London late at night with nowhere to stay. She was lured to his south London flat where he pressed a kitchen knife to her throat and raped her.

The second victim, a neuroscientist of 31, had drunk too much celebrating an examination success. She escaped being raped but suffered an ordeal, first in a grubby concrete rubbish bin recess and then at his home. She was bruised from head to toe.

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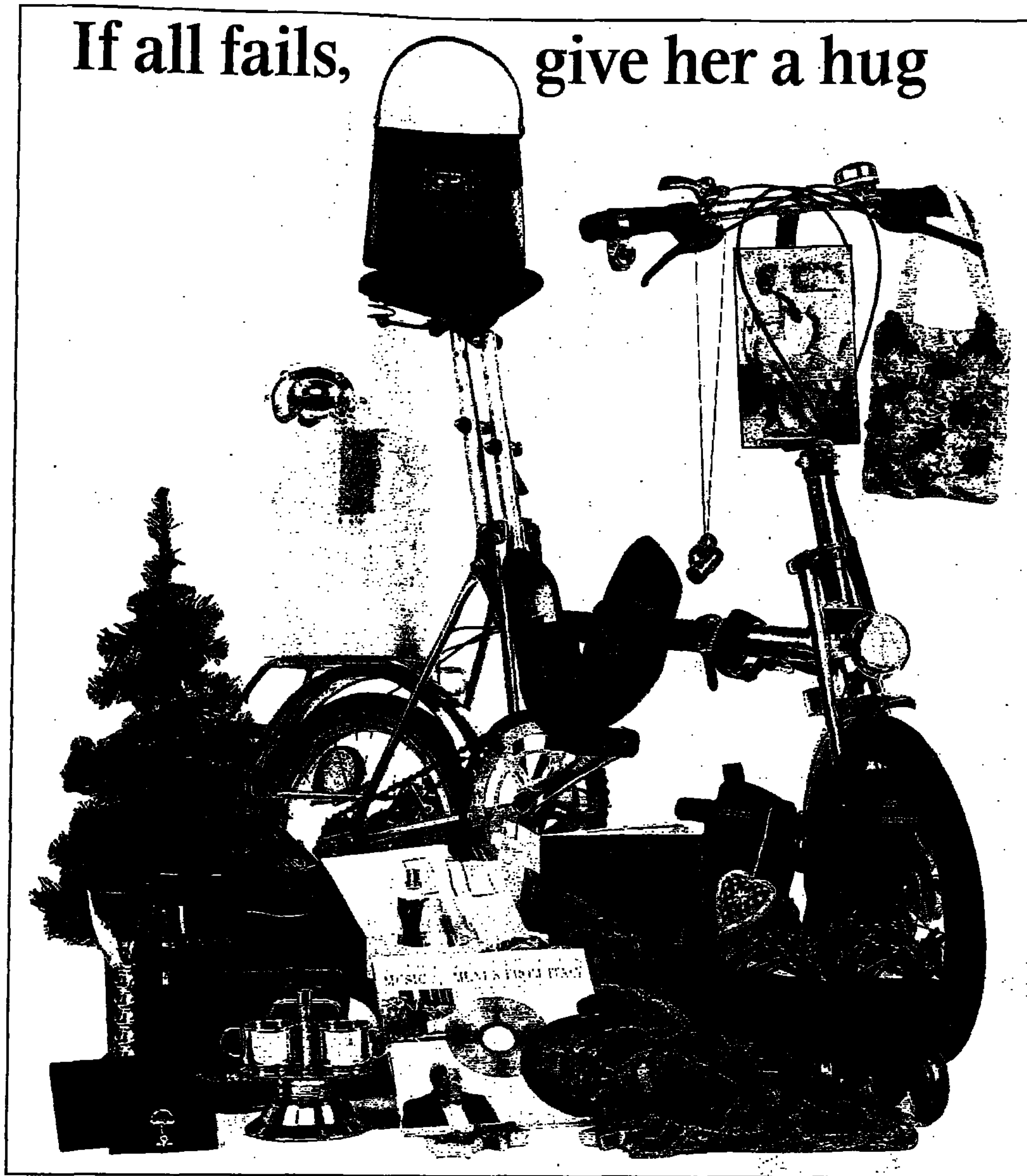
If all fails, give her a hug



PRESENTS FOR HER

With so many shops reluctant to take back unwanted Christmas presents because it depresses their January till receipts, it is important that you buy the woman in your life the right gift first time. If you find choosing the perfect present too daunting a challenge, then do not be ashamed just to play safe: compromise on something that is sensually feminine, but which can be easily absorbed into the everyday life of the household if it turns out not to be, after all, her heart's most burning desire. This way, if she opens her present on Christmas morning and sighs, "Oh darling, it's absolutely lovely, but I think there's probably still some life left in the pure badger shaving brush/186-piece spanner set/Melinda Messenger cufflinks (one breast per cuff, set in sterling silver, very tasteful) that you also bought me last year", your carefully chosen present is not completely wasted.

Of course, the shops will be closed on Christmas Day, making it difficult actually to go out and buy a replacement gift, but do not despair: just remember that every "intimate" survey you have ever read in *Cosmopolitan* says that what women most want from their man is a cuddle and a sense of humour. So wrap up your arms in some festive tissue paper and give your wife or girlfriend a warm hug, while telling her that hilarious joke about the Duchess of York and the dried apricots. If she baulks at your generous, affectionate gift, then it is probably just as well you found out she was an ungrateful, humourless little hussy before you had splashed out on buying her a top-of-the-range, Brian Lara-endorsed cricket bat for her next birthday.

JOE JOSEPH

PRESENT her with the ultimate transport: a **fold-up bike** in stainless steel, £475 from Nauticalia (mail order, 01932 253333). On bicycle saddle: Carolina Herrera's taupe mock-python "Kelly" **bag**, £302 (0181-858 9718). On handle bars: chrome **mini-monocular** for theatre lovers, £37.50, Paperchase (0171-580 8496). For the woman who likes *nothing* better than undressing a classical body: Michelangelo's David **fridge magnet**, £9.95, from Initial Ideas (mail order, 01548 831070) A lasting alternative to roses: cream silk **handbag** by designer Sam Cross, £86, Koh Samui (0171-240 4280). On bike's back: a **candle** that will last all winter, £65, Habitat (0654 334433). On top of candle: silver and jewelled **sphere** with a replaceable scented candle inside, £59.90, Parks Candles (0181-830 6300). Contemporary, and very precious, moonstone, crystal and tourmaline **bracelet** by Sarah Weiss, £460, Koh Samui (as before). On bike's middle-bar: silk and linen **slippers** with golden embroidery, £100, The General Trading Company (0171-730 0411). Black suede **leather** belt with diamanté buckle, £39.95, Harvey Nichols (0171-235 5000). Give *the green woman in your life* a **tree** from the BTCV (the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers). For a donation of £17, volunteers will plant a tree as part of a campaign to increase the UK's native woodland cover (01491 839766).

MIDDLE ROW: Vega Rhine hand-made **wine glass**, in a range of six colours, £58, Baccarat (0171-409 7767). Black nylon **vanity bag**, £460, Tanner Krolle (0171-491 2243) with several compartments to store her essential beauty aids. Walnut leather **CD case**, £95, to carry her music collectionabroad or in the car, Mulberry (01749 340500). Zarvi's **redemption kit**, £35: an indulgent set of bath oils and herbs, Liberty (0171-734 1234). Take her on experience she will never forget: a **flight** in a Tiger Moth, £139 for 30 minutes, Red Letter Days (0181-343 5354). Or give her wings on her feet with the latest K2 *Extreme Flight* **inline skates**, £159, Road Runner (0171-792 0584). Christmas decoration on inline-skate: **velvet heart**, £3.25, General Trading Company (as before).

FRONT ROW (from left): French **purse**, £69, and credit-card purse, £39, both in dark brown leather with golden buckle, Harvey Nichols (as before). Two-cup luxury chrome **espresso maker**, £44.95, Ocean (mail order, 0800 132985). Give her a real taste of Italy with Antonio Carluccio's *Music and Menus from Italy*, a **recipe book** with CD for her to sing along to, £16.99, The Conran Shop (0171-589 7401). Or wrap her in a pure luxury: a hand-embroidered silver silk **scarf**, £450, Georgina von Etzdorf (0171-409 7789)

Photographs by **Des Jenson.** Styling and research by **Jennifer Rüggeberg**

GADGETS

CHRISTMAS is coming, the goose is getting frantic and any time now the decorations should be going up. This year's seasonal Made in China novelty is the singing Christmas tree, which has a sensor attached to a branch.

Walk past the 32in-high plastic tree and it bursts into life. The branches move to reveal large flashing eyes and a huge mouth which mouths festive greetings and bursts of carols.

The tree comes with a mains adaptor and has a three-way switch, volume control and, fortunately, an off switch. Children love it but older elves might find the limited repertoire grates by Christmas Eve.

The singing tree

Wacky Shaky Christmas Pals are 4in-high soft toys built around rigid plastic bodies. Clap your hands and they sing *Jingle Bells* as if on helium. On a carpet they wobble furiously but on a smooth surface they jerk through a full circle before turning themselves off.

TIM WAPSHOTT

- *Singing Christmas Tree, £49.95 plus p&p, and Wacky Shaky Christmas Pals, £9.95 plus p&p, from the Gadget Shop (01482 860860).*

Where you can buy gifts at a gallop

Richard Pitman gets his last-minute presents from a wood and paper shop, **Michael Cable** discovers

In the annual stampede of the Christmas Shopping Stakes, former champion jockey Richard Pitman always waits until well into the final furlong before making his move. Then, on Christmas Eve, he goes galloping into Once A Tree in Cheltenham, knowing it is an odds-on certainty that he will be able to find something there for everyone on his list.

"For anyone like me who leaves buying their gifts until the very last moment, it's the perfect place, full of the most interesting and unusual presents," says Mr Pitman, 54, who is now a racing commentator and best-selling thriller writer.

As the name implies, everything sold in Once A Tree is made from wood or paper. Products come from all around the world and range from toys and games to kitchen utensils and from graceful African figures carved out of ebony to novelties such as wooden wrist watches and wooden fountain pens.

The Cheltenam branch, located in an award-winning, two-storey glass building in the heart of the city's Montpellier shopping area, is one of a chain of six up and down the country.

"The Oxford branch is actually nearer to where I'm living these days, but I'm always in Cheltenham for the racing and my 85-year-old mother still lives up the road so I prefer to come here," he says.

"I regularly used to buy dressing gowns as presents from another shop nearby called The Square Pillow, which was how I first discovered Once A Tree."

And he adds: "Their stuff is so irresistible that I usually end up buying presents for myself as well as for other people. We men normally end up with socks and pants and handkerchiefs at Christmas, so I take the opportunity to spoil myself."

A giraffe carved in the Zimbabwean village of Binga from the wood of the Munyanya tree, a life-size heron made from the Indonesian softwood belalu and a serpent fashioned from a length of creeper, all purchased from Once A Tree, can be found decorating various corners of the Oxfordshire village home he shares with Mandy, his wife.

He also collects walking sticks, of which Once A Tree has a wide selection, and is very taken with its "rain sticks" — dried cactus stems, 2-3ft long and a couple of inches wide, with seeds which cascade down inside when you turn them, creating a soothing sound like falling rain. "Great for de-stressing yourself," he says.

my favourite shop

It is hard to believe Mr Pitman does suffer from stress. But his life has been tough and success did not come easy. Born within a bookmakers' signalling distance of the racecourse at Cheltenham, he became a stable lad because, he says, "what else do you do if you're the uneducated runt of the litter who has failed all nine of your O-levels?"

He went on to win 470 races, including just about every classic except the Grand National, for which he was cruelly pipped in the last few strides in 1973.

Eighteen years later, this disappointment was compounded when, as a commentator, he watched exactly the same thing happen to Mark, his son by his first wife Jenny Pitman.

During his own 15-year riding career, he broke nearly every bone is his body many times over — nose and collar-bone at least ten times each, ribs, ankles, legs and arms on a regular basis. On top of that there was the continual torture, for a naturally chunky figure, of sweating off the pounds to make the weight.

So why does anybody do it? "There's nothing like thrill of riding half a ton of thoroughbred over a fence in front of a big crowd," he shrugs, with a twinkle in his one good eye, having lost the sight of the other five years ago after being repeatedly kicked by a horse that threw him as he was trying to break it in.

That happened some time after he had retired from racing to become a BBC commentator and to run a small stud, breeding racehorses and Connemara ponies. A true countryman at heart, he feels a particular affinity with wood and craftsmanship which is why, he supposes, he is so drawn to Once A Tree.

He just loves the feel of wood, he says, running his hands over some of the intricate puzzle boxes which fit together like jigsaws and come in walnut, burr maple and koa.

"And look at these," he adds, reaching for one of the flower vases in lignum vitae, the cream, green and brown colours of which change subtly in different lights. "They make marvellous and relatively inexpensive presents."

Naturally, he takes to a £595 rocking horse, by far the most expensive item in the shop, and sportingly agrees to be pictured in the saddle.

The old championship style is still there but, as he says cheerfully: "I sometimes miss the thrills, but not the spills."

- *Once A Tree, The Courtyard, Montpellier, Cheltenham (01242 224642). Mon-Sat 9.30am-5.30pm, Sun 11am-5pm.*

CHRIS BARKER

Under starter's orders: Richard Pitman with managers Luan Nanness and Belinda Wilson

Once A Tree specialises in wood and paper products

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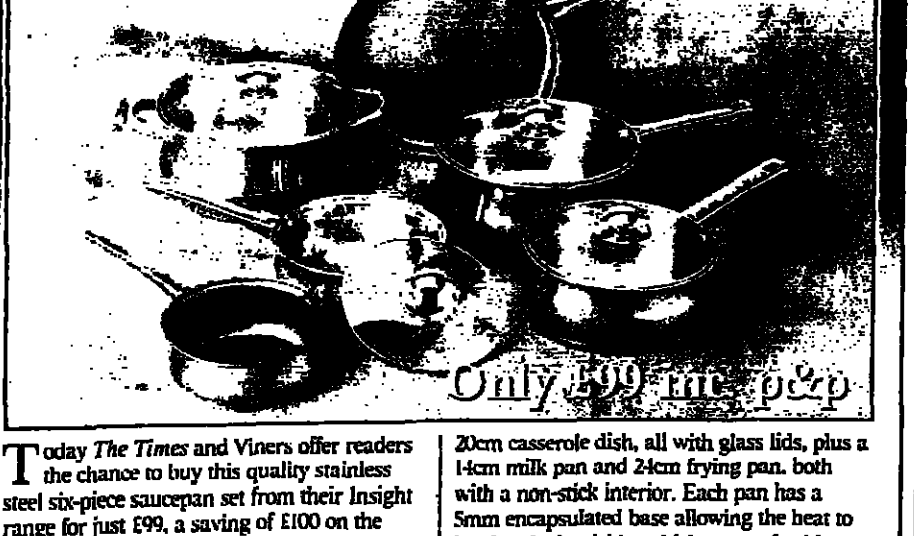
CHANGING TIMES



BARGAINS

There are bargains to be had all over the country: With £100, what would you buy?

THERE is a rotten tree stump in our garden. It is the only excuse I need to visit the West Midland Farmers' retail centre in Melksham, Wiltshire, with my £100.

WMF sells practical things for farmers: sheep dip, gate posts, chain saws and electric fences. There are no frills (farmers do not waste money) and everything is built to last. It is the sheer practicality that impresses me. And the 18 different types of wellington boot, from pricey green Hunters to heavy black galoshes with real heels and soles. Wellies are the first item on my list and I choose the Steel Shanks with rust-red soles and shiny patent uppers. Not bad for £8.95 and a perfect accompaniment to the £7.95 waterproof suit. Just the thing to wear when uprooting a tree stump.

Rural essential

Sadly, WMF does not sell dynamite. But the £19.51 Hand Power Puller Shifts Two Tons is the next best thing. Bolt it to the wall with the 15in adjustable spanner (£9.81) and you can shift almost anything.

Having pulled out the root I need to chop it up, which is why I have spent £16.99 on a tree-felling axe with American hickory handle. Once the hole is filled in and turfed over, an old-fashioned galvanised watering can with brass rose (£10.95) is just what is needed.

Now a confession. I am an impostor in WFM, so I am going to buy a sign, Beware of Bull, for £4.30. There is still enough left over for an aluminium lamp shade and a combine harvester — for my five-year-old son.

SIMON DE BRUXELLES

هكذا من الأصل

MPs are urged to get on their bikes

By Nicholas Wood

MPs ARE to get pedalling, with the introduction of an allowance for using their bicycles in the course of parliamentary duties. The Top Salaries Review Body is fixing a mileage rate, and will report early next year.

The move comes more than 15 years after Norman Tebbit's celebrated injunction to the unemployed to get "on your bike". Sadly, the allowance will be of no use to the hordes of Conservatives sacked from the Commons by the public on May 1.

The review body's involvement was announced by Ann Taylor, the Leader of the Commons. Her move followed pressure from Anne Campbell, Labour MP for Cambridge, who disclosed that during the summer recess she was cycling 70 miles a week on constituency business.

Ms Campbell, who does not own a car, said she was wearing out the tyres pretty quickly and suggested that 5p a mile might be a fair recompense. She admitted that, when in London, she walked to the Commons rather than cycling, because of the ferocious traffic. "Cycling is quicker, healthier, cheaper, does not add to traffic congestion, and does not damage the planet by causing global warming," Ms Campbell said.

There is a trend among employers to make generous reimbursement to staff who use their bicycles on company business — a result of concerns about the environment, parking problems, and the prospect of local councils making higher charges for company parking spaces.

A survey by the Cyclists' Touring Club found that ten public and private bodies paid a bicycle allowance of more than 30p a mile — equivalent to rates paid for car use. Top of the list is Southampton University Hospital, which pays a staggering 55p. The hospital has severe parking problems, and staff at all levels claim the money for cycling between its four sites or to clinics. Ms Campbell said that she was seeking only a "token" payment. The Southampton rate could buy a new bicycle every few weeks, she joked.

The University of Brighton pays cyclists 40p a mile, but the rate drops to 22.5p a mile for staff who manage to pedal more than 4,000 miles a year. BAA, which runs Heathrow airport, pays a more modest 16p a mile, but also encourages staff to leave their cars at home by paying them £200 to give up their parking permits.

These figures are well above the 6.2p a mile paid by the Post Office and the 6.4p of the Ministry of Defence.

MPs can claim 48.4p per mile for using their own cars for parliamentary business; or 22.3p if they cover more than 20,000 miles a year.

Ms Campbell said: "If you go in your car ten miles, you get paid £4.80. If you travel by rail, bus or taxi, you can claim the cost back. Go on your bike and you don't get a penny. I am very keen for cycling to be promoted. MPs using their bicycles is a good way to do this."

TOP TEN CYCLING ALLOWANCES

Hard luck, Brighton students: only university staff can claim — and even then the rate falls to 22.5p a mile for more than 4,000 miles a year. (Source: Cyclists' Touring Club, July 1997)

1: Southampton University Hospital	**55p/mile**
2: Borough of Kensington and Chelsea	**44p/mile**
3: Frenchay Health Care Trust	**40p/mile**
4: Bath & NE Somerset council	**40p/mile**
5: The University of Brighton	**40p/mile**
6: New Forest District Council	**31.7p/mile**
7: London Borough of Merton	**31p/mile**
8: East Hampshire District Council	**30.2p/mile**
9: Dovetail Management Consultancy, London	**30p/mile**
10: Ipswich Borough Council	**30p/mile**

Anne Campbell, MP for Cambridge, outside King's College yesterday. She gets round her constituency on her bike

News at Ten time debate hots up

By Raymond Snoddy
Media Editor

THE debate over the future of *News at Ten* is intensifying. Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, has made it clear he would prefer that the programme remains where it is in the scedules.

Richard Eyre, chief executive of the ITV Network Centre, is working on a new ITV schedule to be announced in January. It is widely believed it will involve a new attempt to move the flagship news programme.

When the ITV companies previously tried to move *News at Ten* to an earlier time, there was a huge political row, with letters to the ITC from the then Prime Minster, John Major, the late John Smith and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The support of the big three ITV companies, Carlton, Granada and United News and Media, which each own 20 per cent of ITN, would be needed before *Newsat Ten* could be moved, as would the permission of the Independent Television Authority.

During questions at a Media Society dinner on Thursday night, Mr Smith said the decision was ultimately one for the ITC. He personally wanted to see a spread of main news programmes throughout the evening. Meanwhile, Nicholas Winterton, chairman of the all-party backbench Media Committee, has put down an early day motion calling for *News at Ten* to stay where it is.

As if to rub the point home, the *News at Ten* studio has been chosen as the venue for a Chris Smith press conference on Monday to outline the events planned by the Culture, Media and Sport Department to mark Britain's presidency of the European Union.

The visit also marks the deal signed by ITN whereby it takes a 49 per cent interest in and managerial control of Euronews, the European cable and satellite news channel.

Girl, 16, dies after sniffing gas fuel

By Paul Wilkinson

A CHOIRGIRL who starred in an anti-drugs community play has died in hospital after apparently sniffing gas lighter fuel. Chantelle Bleau, 16, is thought to have inhaled the gas at a friend's house.

Yesterday her parents, Richard, 38, and Pat Bleau, 42, said they had no idea she had experimented with drugs, but had learnt since her death that she had tried gas on a number of occasions recently. Her mother said: "We are a very close family and there were no symptoms or signs of what she was doing. I just don't know why she did it."

Chantelle, from Bradford, West Yorkshire, regularly attended the Abundant Life Church, an independent Christian evangelical church, in the city with her parents, her brother, Kelvin, six, and five-year-old sister, Natasha. She hoped to become an infant school teacher and had recently been given a leading role in an anti-drugs play, called *Deadly Deals*, which was touring schools in Bradford.

John Lewis, the principal at the Dixon Community Technical College where Chantalle studied, said she was a lively and popular student "whose life has been cut short well before its time". She was planning to sit 11 GCSEs next summer.

An inquest was opened and adjourned yesterday.

Chantelle Bleau: in anti-drugs play

BBC puts its faith in 'feel-good' factor

By Carol Midgley, Media Correspondent

THE BBC is relying on the "feel-good" factor to win the Christmas ratings war with ITV. Comedy will dominate the Christmas Day schedule, with special episodes of *One Foot in the Grave*, *Men Behaving Badly* and *They Think It's All Over* running back to back on BBC1.

Humour and light entertainment form the backbone of the £42 million schedule throughout the festive season. A *Carry On* film will be screened on most nights during the season. Christmas Day on BBC1 will also feature *The Two Ronnies*, Noel Edmonds and the film *The Flintstones* and *Auntie's Festive Bloomers*. The drag artist Lily Savage, Mrs Merton, Shirley Bassey and Bette Midler are among the stars featured in programmes over the period. The special Christmas Day film is *The Mask*, starring Jim Carrey.

Last year's *Only Fools And Horses* trilogy won record audiences. Peter Salmon, BBC1 controller, said yesterday: "BBC1 has an irresistible line-up of comedy and entertainment." However, a *Modern Times* special, *The Shrine*, will explore the public pilgrimage to Kensington Palace after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales.

Christmas drama includes an adaptation of Wilkie Collins' Victorian ghost story *The Woman In White*, as well as visits to *Ballykissangel* and *EastEnders*. *Madame Butterfly* is BBC2's Christmas Day opera offering and the actor Simon Callow once again becomes Charles Dickens in *A Christmas Dickens*.

Yesterday the BBC, which traditionally triumphs in the Christmas viewing ratings, confirmed that the children's favourite *Teletubbies* will start 2½ hours late on Christmas Day to give children the chance to open their presents.

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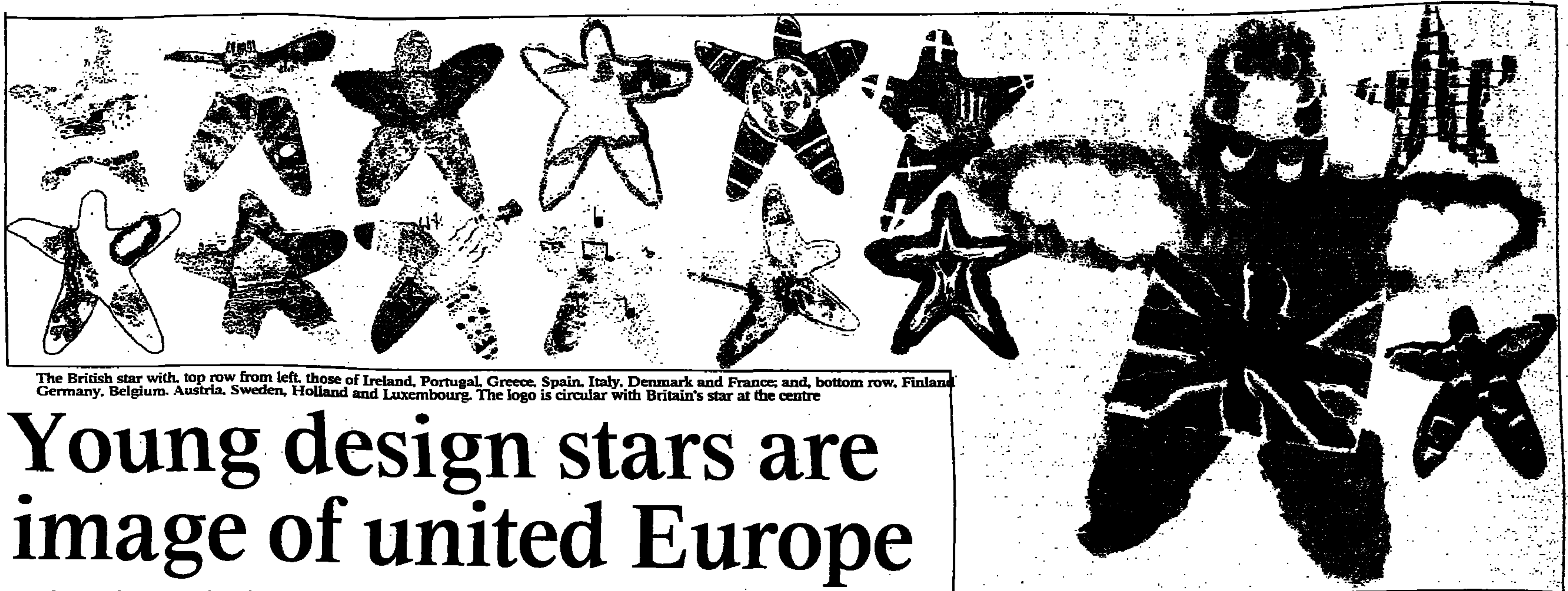


The British star with, top row from left, those of Ireland, Portugal, Greece, Spain, Italy, Denmark and France; and, bottom row, Finland Germany, Belgium, Austria, Sweden, Holland and Luxembourg. The logo is circular with Britain's star at the centre

Young design stars are image of united Europe

The Tories thought of it, Labour approved it, but 32 children created *the logo for Britain's presidency* of the EU. **Polly Newton** reports

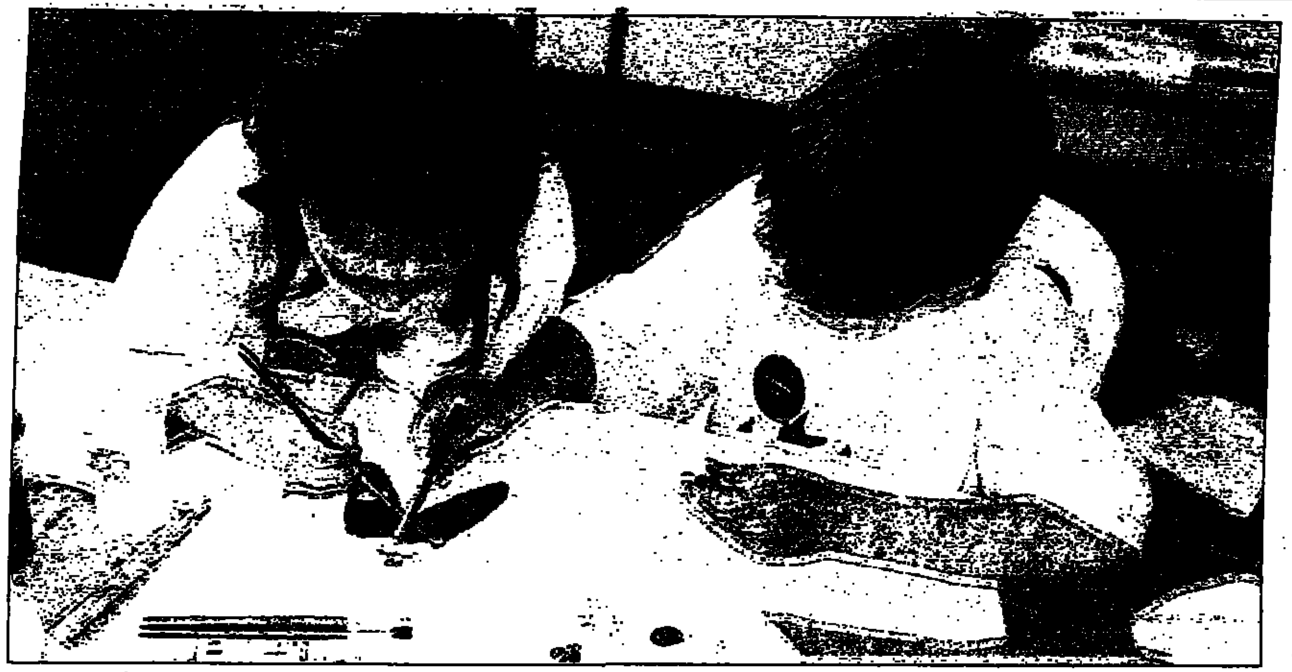
IT WAS hailed by Tony Blair yesterday as the latest symbol of new Labour's drive for a new Britain. But the UK's logo for its six month presidency of the European Union was commissioned under the Tories, with orders that it should reflect "modern Britain".

Newell and Sorrell, the London company that conceived the logo, began work on it last April. The original briefing came from civil servants at the Foreign Office, which was then under the stewardship of Malcolm Rifkind.

The logo, which will appear on EU literature published during Britain's presidency, cost £38,000 to design and produce. It was created in five hours one day in July at the company's offices in Primrose Hill, North London. Thirty-two children aged between eight and 11 were invited to design 15 stars, each representing one of the countries of the EU.

For each star, a British child was paired with one from another EU member state to create a design that encapsulated their ideas of that country. Three children collaborated on Britain's star and three on the one for Luxembourg. The British children were chosen mainly from schools that had worked previously with Newell and Sorrell. The European children, most of whom were living in Britain, were found through personal contacts or their countries' embassies.

Many of the stars reflect the landscape and climate of the countries they represent. Sweden has mountains, Portugal the sun and the sea and Germany rivers and forests. Denmark has a Viking boat and the Little Mermaid. Others were inspired more by culture: Austria, the birthplace of Mozart, features musical notes and Italy has a pizza, which is the favourite food of both boys who created its star. And this may be modern Britain, but the UK's star features the most traditional British symbol of all — the Union Jack.



Spirit of co-operation: Anna Stilwell of Portugal and Nathan Adamson of Britain designing the Portugese star

John Simmons, a director of Newell and Sorrell, said: "We were given the brief that we needed to reflect Britain's role as a modern and full member of the EU and also to exemplify the excellence of Britain's up and coming young design talent ... It sounds like the words of new Labour but it was actually in the brief from the previous government."

Mr Simmons said it was that initial request which eventually inspired the idea of children working together to create a logo. Once Labour had won the election, Newell and Sorrell made more detailed plans in consultation with the new Government. Mr Blair is said to have been closely involved.

Asked whether the finished design would have been any different if the Conservatives had been returned to power, Mr Simmons replied: "It's hard to say."

The Prime Minister met the young logo artists yesterday at Downing Street shortly before their design was unveiled at a press conference at Waterloo International Station. Mr Blair, accompanied by his wife, Cherie, tried to greet each pair of children in the appropriate language. "I was trying to think of 'good day' in every language and I'm afraid I only got up to about five. I stopped at Finnish," he said. In his foreword to a booklet that explains how the logo was created, Mr Blair says that he wants to see Europe looking forward to a brighter future for everybody. "That is why I wanted the symbol for the United Kingdom's Presidency to represent the future. I asked children to come together to create a vibrant and youthful picture of Europe."

A Foreign Office spokeswoman said that Mr Blair and Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, had been consulted about the detail of the logo "straight away" after Labour's election victory. She said it was not surprising that the Tories had asked for a logo to reflect modern Britain. "I don't think that to come up with 'modern Britain' is that novel, do you?"

Mr Blair had taken the idea a step further, however. "What the Prime Minister was saying today was about a modern, forward-looking Britain and involving all the people right down to the production of the logo, with the emphasis being on young people."

Stick within the law, Blair tells farmers

By Jill Sherman and Philip Webster

TONY BLAIR urged protesting farmers yesterday to stay within the law as lorry drivers demanded compensation from the Government for trade lost because of the blockade.

At the same time the Irish Government said that beef on the bone should be withdrawn from sale. The strongly worded advice, which stops short of a ban, was issued by republic's Health Minister, Brian Cowen, after Britain's decsision to impose a ban.

It was confirmed yesterday that the British dban will be implemented a week on Monday. Jack Cunningham, the Agriculture Minister, is trying to win Treasury backing for an emergency package of help for Britain's poorest hill farmers, who will be hardest hit.

As the beef row overshadowed the launch of Britain's logo for its presidency of the European Union, Mr Blair said he fully understood the difficulties of farmers, but blockades did not help their case. "The rule of law must be upheld and we will ensure that it is," he said.

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, also delivered a strong message to the farmers, condemning their attempts to blockade the ports in protest at imports of cheap beef from Ireland. "We took a very firm line with France when there was a blockade recently of the lorries. I'm afraid we cannot apply different standards to Irish drivers now," he said.

Dr Cunningham is trying to persuade Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, and Alistair Darling, Chief Secretary to the Treaury, to raid the Government's contingency fund to help the hard-pressed beef industry. But ministers are nervous about announcing any compensation package at present because of the growing disruption at British ports.

Although ministers, particularly Dr Cunningham, believe that many of the farmers have a good case and desperately need help, the port demonstrations have provided a presentational problem because they cannot be seen to be giving in to force.

After a lengthy discussion in the Cabinet on Thursday, Dr Cunningham is understood to have drawn up a plan of action to help hill farmers, particularly those on low incomes. Some are living on less than £10,000 a year and he is anxious that sparse resources are concentrated on them.

Next week there will be a period of statutory consultation and an order laid before Parliament on Friday to enable the ban to be imposed.

Strange, the French look jumpy

The Prime Minister, speaking at the launch the logo for Britain's presidency of the EU, made clear that ministers had acted immediately on the advice of the Government's chief medical officer, Sir Kenneth Calman. "It was on his strong advice that we took the action that we did. We would be subject to equal criticism had we neglected it."

Earlier the European Commission warned Britain that it could face rapid legal proceedings in the European Court if it failed within five days to take adequate measures to stop the blockade.

Mario Monti, Commissioner for the Single Market, has demanded detailed evidence that action is being taken to ensure that meat from Ireland and the Continent is passing freely through British ports. "The five days are a deadline," the commissioner's spokeswoman said. Under EU law, the Commission can seek an urgent injunction from the Luxembourg court ordering a government to repair a breach of the law on the flow of goods.

Yesterday Tony Blair set out Britain's agenda for the EU presidency, which starts next month, insisting that member states should work as a team. He emphasised that Britain would work constructively with its European partners to ensure that the single currency was launched sucessfully.

Mr Blair also dismissed recent suggestions that Britain would not be part of the "Euro-X" — the inner circle of the 10 or 11 countries that will be in the first wave to join the single currency. He said: "Let's just wait and see what will happen about that. We have made our position clear and it is understood and essentially supported by our European partners."

Simon Jenkins, page 22

Protesters deliver violence warning

By Michael Hornsby
Agriculture Correspondent

FARMERS warned the Government yesterday that protests against falling incomes and cheap food imports could spread and become more violent if the police took tougher action against port demonstrations.

Up to now the police and port authorities have co-operated with protesting farmers, allowing them to stop and question lorry drivers and persuade them to turn round and return home.

Peter Rogers, a leader of the farmers in North Wales who have been picketing Holyhead to stop Irish beef imports, said: "I have been trying to keep the protests within bounds, and the police have been very helpful. But I fear the mood may be changing because the police are under pressure from the Government to take a tougher line. That would make it much more difficult to contain the situation."

Mr Rogers, who has farmed on Anglesey for 25 years, was speaking after meeting Ron Davies, the Welsh Secretary, with other farmers' representatives. "We had a fair hearing, but made little progress," Mr Rogers said. "There was probably not much he could do. It is Jack Cunningham, the Minister of Agriculture, and Tony Blair who have got to come up with the help we need."

In a joint statement issued after the meeting, Mr Davies "acknowledged the problems facing agriculture and the depth of frustration that was felt". He recognised farmers' legitimate right to protest, but said they must "obey the law and not impede the free movement of goods".

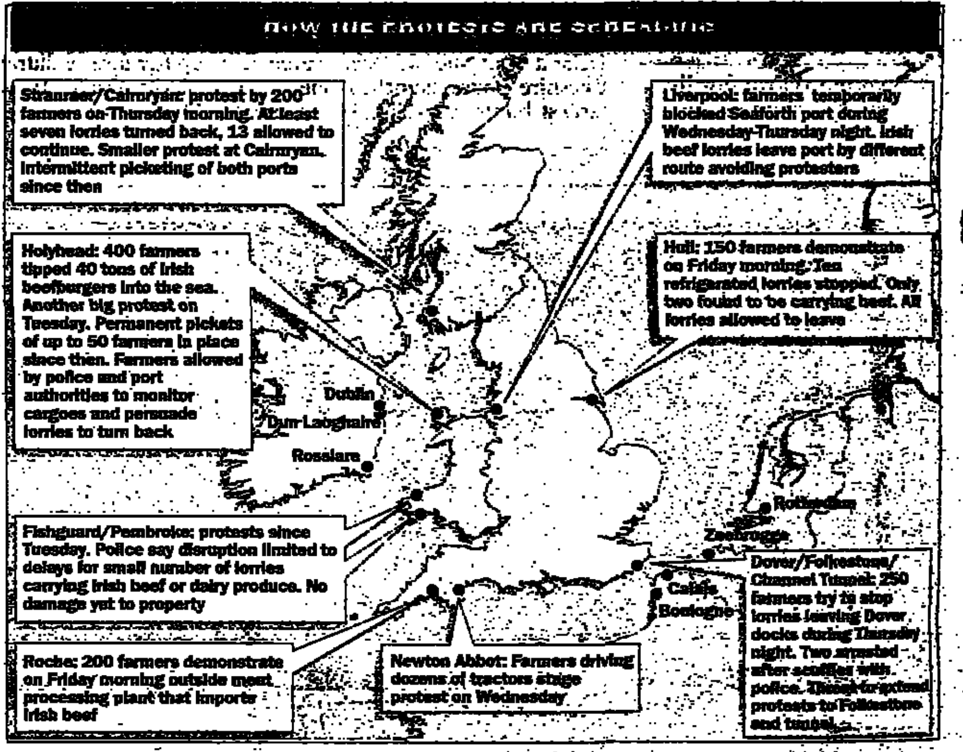
The only act of violence so far was at Holyhead early last Monday when farmers ambushed a lorry and tipped its cargo of Irish beefburgers into the sea. Since then protests have spread to Fishguard and Pembroke in South Wales, to Stranraer and Cairnryan in southwest Scotland, and to Hull and Dover.

Last night farmers in the West Country found a new target, picketing the Millbay Docks at Plymouth. Anthony Gibson, regional director of the National Farmers' Union, said the aim was to put pressure on the Government to "pull their finger out."

Jim Walker, a beef and sheep farmer from Dumfries and Galloway who has been involved in the Scottish protests, said: "We have had a good relationship with the police so far. We are allowed to talk to the drivers and persuade them to return home. Last night seven drivers agreed to turn back. Thirteen others were allowed to continue their journeys."

The protesters have established a similar arrangement with police elsewhere. But the Government is under growing pressure from [illegible] to take tougher action.

Daniel Hodges, spokesman for the Road Haulage Association, said that it would seek compensation for any action that prevented drivers from earning their livelihoods.



Stranraer/Cairnryan: protest by 200 farmers on Thursday morning. At least seven lorries turned back, 13 allowed to continue. Smaller protest at Cairnryan. Intermittent picketing of both ports since then

Liverpool: farmers temporarily blocked Seaforth port during Wednesday-Thursday night. Irish beef lorries leave port by different route avoiding protesters

Holyhead: 400 farmers tipped 40 tons of Irish beefburgers into the sea. Another big protest on Tuesday. Permanent pickets of up to 50 farmers in place since then. Farmers allowed by police and port authorities to monitor cargoes and persuade lorries to turn back

Hull: 150 farmers demonstrate on Friday morning. Ten refrigerated lorries stopped. Only two found to be carrying beef. All lorries allowed to leave

Fishguard/Pembroke: protests since Tuesday. Police say disruption limited to delays for small number of lorries carrying Irish beef or dairy produce. No damage yet to property

Dover/Folkestone/Channel Tunnel: 250 farmers try to stop lorries leaving Dover docks during Thursday night. Two arrested after scuffles with police. Threat to extend protests to Folkestone and tunnel

Roche: 200 farmers demonstrate on Friday morning outside meat processing plant that imports Irish beef

Newton Abbot: Farmers driving dozens of tractors stage protest on Wednesday

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Life for rapist who killed girl to stop her telling mother

By Russell Jenkins

Kayleigh Ward: body was thrown into river

A RAPE victim aged 9 was murdered after she told her attacker that she was going to tell her mother. Kayleigh Ward was trying to leave the scene of the attack in Chester when John O'Shaughnessy strangled her with his belt and threw her body into the tidal waters of the River Dee.

Yesterday, O'Shaughnessy, 31, was jailed for a minimum of 30 years at Mold Crown Court. Kayleigh's mother Yvonne Ward, 37, sitting in the gallery, shouted: "I hope you rot in Hell."

Mrs Ward, who has two other children, said afterwards: "Now that the trial is over, we can begin to think about living again. However, our lives will never be the same now that Kayleigh has gone, and with the knowledge of the terrible circumstances surrounding her death."

O'Shaughnessy, an unemployed drifter, spoke only to plead guilty. Mr Justice Maurice Kay said: "There is no crime more horrific than the murder of a child. You used her, aged 9, and a little over 4 ft tall, for your sexual gratification. You determined to kill her because you knew that if she had lived you would have faced prosecution for rape. So you strangled her and threw her into the river in the most inhuman way.

"It is difficult to imagine anything more depraved, cruel or cowardly."

The Ward family and O'Shaughnessy, an unemployed drifter, lived at the same council-run halfway house for the homeless in Lorne Street, Chester. Kayleigh went missing six days before Christmas last year. The court heard that she had met O'Shaughnessy in a late-night supermarket after returning from her school's Christmas disco. O'Shaughnessy persuaded her to take the riverbank path with him on the way to a chip shop. Once they had reached a remote spot, he ordered her to remove her shoes and tights and raped her.

John Rogers, for the prosecution, said: "At this point, she said to him, 'I'll tell my mum. I'll tell my mum. I'll tell Beth [her older sister].'" She dressed and turned to walk back up the steps from the riverbank when O'Shaughnessy pulled off his belt and strangled her. When the belt broke, he made sure she was dead by using her tights. He carried her body to the river's edge and threw her into the tidal waters, hoping that she would be carried into the Irish Sea. Asked later by police why he killed her, he replied: "She was bound to have told people. It was the easiest way out."

Mr Rogers said that O'Shaughnessy was interviewed as a matter of routine, and again when he changed his alibi. Four days later, he took an overdose and was hospitalised. He confessed shortly after the body was found.

O'Shaughnessy was given a concurrent life term for rape. Alex Carlile, QC, for the defence, said that he was a depressive with minor previous convictions. He had led an unstable life with an insecure childhood, like Kayleigh's.

Mr Carlile suggested that the decision by a depressive to rape and murder Kayleigh amounted effectively to suicide, and that he should be given credit for making a full confession and pleading guilty. He said: "Although the rape and murder were acts of the most terrible cruelty and cowardice, the decision to plead guity is not."

ANDREW PRICE

O'Shaughnessy: his crime was depraved, cruel and cowardly, said the judge

Streetwise tomboy who walked into danger

Yvonne Ward: family evicted from estate

IT WAS last Christmas's bleakest story: a heart-wrenching public appeal for a vanished, streetwise child. In the season of goodwill, police attempted to entice Kayleigh Ward back home with a promise of a CD player from Santa, a lavish gift in an impoverished family.

Kayleigh was an impish tomboy with a jagged fringe, cut by her sister. Classmates nicknamed her Oddbod. She knew her way around the streets, liked to talk to tramps, and it was thought that she may have taken up with Gypsies or jumped on a ferry to Ireland. But she was dead even as Cheshire police launched one of its largest hunts, pursuing 350 reported sightings around the country, searching waste ground and trawling canals. Two months later, her partially clothed body was thrown up by an unusually high tide.

Kayleigh sometimes played truant from Blacon Hall Junior School. She liked to visit sports centres and shopping parades and could be disruptive. Although far from a star pupil, she is remembered with affection by teachers who dwell on her tomboyish charm.

Her father had left her mother some years ago. Mrs Ward, 37, had brought up her three children on the deprived Blacon estate. In October last year, Mrs Ward was evicted from her council house for non-payment of rent, and resettled in two rooms in a council halfway house. It was a hugely disorientating experience for Kayleigh, whose truancy shot up. It also placed her in the path of her killer, another resident of the hostel.

In the days after Kayleigh's disappearance, Mrs Ward railed against the eviction as "heartless". The council's housing chiefs suggested gently that Mrs Ward failed to sort out her affairs despite multiple county court hearings.

Kayleigh knew her killer well. She thought of him as a friend and, says her mother, would have "gone off with him quite innocently". Mrs Ward said: "I was living under the same roof as the man who murdered my daughter. He pretended to show concern for me. I made him tea and, when he was short of money, I gave him food out of the cupboard. I even gave him money two days before Kayleigh was found."

It was O'Shaughnessy, she said, who told police that three Gypsies had knocked at the hostel door looking for Kayleigh "but it was him putting the police off the track".

She described her daughter as a "tomboy with a heart of gold — she was never spiteful and always generous. If one person was sitting in the gutter and one in a Rolls-Royce, Kayleigh would treat them the same."

Killer stopped from suing health chiefs

By Mark Henderson

CHRISTOPHER CLUNIS, who stabbed Jonathan Zito to death at a London Underground station in December 1992, was stopped yesterday by the Court of Appeal from suing the health authority that had treated him.

Jayne Zito, the victim's widow, afterwards withdrew her action against Clunis for assault and trespass, which was conditional on his winning damages. She has no legal right to sue the authority.

The appeal ruling means that health authorities cannot be held liable for mentally ill patients not sectioned under the Mental Health Act if they commit violent crimes as outpatients. Clunis was told that Camden and Islington Health Authority bore no duty of care towards him after his release from hospital in September 1992 and could not be held responsible for his actions.

The decision overturned a High Court ruling that allowed Clunis to sue. He was refused leave to appeal to the House of Lords, although his lawyers intend to petition the law lords to have an appeal heard.

Clunis stabbed Mr Zito, 27, in the eye at a station in North London. Mrs Zito, who does not blame Clunis for her husband's death and regards him as a victim, said she was disgusted by the appeal decision.

"I could understand if it was on the ground that he should not benefit from killing Jonathan, but not on the basis that the authority had no duty of care," she said.

"That somebody like him could walk into the street with a knife, while highly vulnerable and dangerous, and kill someone, and yet nobody has a duty of care — well, they might as well have put the knife in his hand themselves."

The ruling effectively absolved health authorities from the duty to provide proper care for the mentally ill, she said. "It is giving carte blanche to psychiatrists to discharge people into the community and when something goes terribly, terribly wrong, there is no redress."

Mrs Zito, who had been married for three months, is the founder of the Zito Trust, which campaigns on mental health issues.

She said that since her husband's death, more than 100 killings had been committed by people who had had contact with psychiatric services.

Clunis had claimed redress for "injury, loss and damage" caused by the failure of a Camden and Islington doctor to have him sectioned after his release from Guy's Hospital. He believes that he would not have killed had he been admitted to hospital, and that he is unlikely to be released from Rampton special hospital, Nottinghamshire, where he was detained indefinitely after admitting manslaughter on the ground of diminished responsibility.

Jayne Zito: forced to drop her own action

Lord Justice Beldam, sitting with Lord Justice Potter and Mrs Justice Bracewell, held that it would not be just and reasonable to impose a common-law duty of care on an authority in relation to its duty to provide aftercare. Nor would it be reasonable to hold the authority liable to Clunis for the consequences of his criminal act.

Camden and Islington Health Authority said it would have been wrong for Clunis to have benefited financially from the killing he had admitted.

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Women fight to stop ban on PMT vitamin

100,000 protest letters sent to MPs over proposed ban on the sale of vitamin B6, writes **Dominic Kennedy**

A campaign has been launched by thousands of women who take the vitamin B6 after the Government announced plans to ban the supplement from sale.

An estimated 100,000 letters have been sent to MPs by those championing the freedom to buy the supplement from health food shops. The vitamin, taken to relieve premenstrual tension or by those on hormone replacement therapy, costs about £2 for a jar of 50 pills.

The Food Safety Minister, Jeff Rooker, provoked an outcry in July when he proposed outlawing the sale of anything but the weakest doses of B6. Pills containing 50mg or more of the vitamin will require a doctor's prescription.

Already British women are buying in bulk on the Continent because many pharmacists have voluntarily cleared their shelves of the pills. The MPs Teresa Gorman, who has been taking vitamin B6 for 20 years, and Ann Winterton are leading the campaign in Parliament to persuade Mr Rooker to change his mind.

The row has thrown the spotlight back onto Katharina Dalton, who invented the term PMT 40 years ago and has since helped women to defeat charges, including murder and arson, in court. Her study in 1987 blaming vitamin B6 for nerve problems in patients is the main medical evidence cited by Mr Rooker to justify the ban, which threatens the future of many health food stores. The only other key piece of scientific research is a study of the effects of large doses of the vitamin on beagles.

The campaign for freedom to buy the pills has been coordinated by the makers and sellers of PMT health supplements, an industry worth an estimated £87 million a year.

Dr Dalton, who coined the phrase PMT 40 years ago

Rooker: to ban vitamin

Vitamin B6, also known as pyridoxine, occurs naturally in grains, potatoes, milk, meat and beer. The average diet easily exceeds the required daily dose, and deficiency is rare. Since the 1930s it has been recommended as a diuretic. Women who have problems with water retention, which can cause discomfort in the abdomen or breasts, have long hailed the vitamin as their saviour. Such symptoms are commonly experienced by PMT sufferers or middle-aged women on hormone replacement therapy.

In 1987 Dr Dalton, who has a private clinic in London, wrote a study on the effects of vitamin B6 overdose. A 49-year-old woman who had taken 75mg of the vitamin daily, along with zinc, magnesium and multivitamins for two years, complained of sensations such as ants biting her legs, electric shock pains in her head and numb fingertips.

Some women suffered such bone pain and muscle weakness that they feared that they had multiple sclerosis. Two sought professional advice after losing their sex drive. Dr Dalton's study earned a prize from the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine but gathered dust until the Consumers' Association, publishers of *Which?*, urged the Government to review the safety of vitamin supplements.

The Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, made up of experts appointed by the Chief Medical Officer, calculated that the lowest safe dose of vitamin B in humans was 50mg a day. Leaving a margin of safety, and considering that a study 23 years ago had shown an adverse effect on dogs fed the vitamin, the committee recommended a maximum daily intake of 10mg.

Health food shops now claim they face ruin. Vitamin B6 is one of the commonest products on their shelves, often sold in mixtures with other vitamins. A typical pill contains 50mg or 100mg for a daily dose. Mr Rooker, in one of his first acts as minister, proposed outlawing the sale of doses stronger than 10mg except through pharmacies.

TONY WHITE

Carolyn Larter in her office with some of the vitamin pills she takes daily. She began taking B6 to counter stress

The campaign to change the minister's mind has been led by a pressure group called Consumers for Health Choice, which is backed by manufacturers, retailers and individuals. They have spent £80,000 on public relations, a telephone hotline, and printing letters to MPs, which are distributed to health food stores.

Morecambe Health Food Centre alone has found 400 customers willing to sign the letters. Solgar Vitamins has questioned the independence of the Committee on Toxicity, complaining that some members are shareholders, consultants or employees of pharmaceutical companies. The idea is that drugs firms would benefit if alternative remedies were banned.

There are close family connections on both sides. Sarah Winterton, the daughter of Ann Winterton, whose early day motion has been signed by 160 MPs, is the administrator of Consumers for Health Choice. Dr Dalton's daughter runs PMS Help, which Mr Rooker has gratefully cited as a supporter of the Government's stance. Not for the first time, Dr Dalton is facing severe criticism. Some say she offers an expensive rival PMT therapy involving progesterone from her private clinic. Dr Dalton retorts that she makes no profit and only charges consultancy fees.

Instead of shrinking from a fight, Dr Dalton has weighed in with a new, far more sensational charge against vitamin B6: that it may be linked to birth deformities, known as phocomelia.

She told a meeting in the House of Lords that in 1985 the State University of New York had reported, in *The Lancet*, a phocomelia case in a woman who had taken large doses of vitamin B6 in pregnancy. Dr Dalton claims to have anecdotal evidence of six possible cases and knows colleagues in a similar position.

Mrs Gorman began taking 100mg pills of vitamin B6 in the 1970s on her doctor's advice. She stocked up on the supplement during her summer visit to Portugal, knowing that a British ban was imminent. She complains of having to waste her GP's time getting a prescription.

She said: "The minister is green behind the ears. Why would they suddenly come across a ten-year-old study and decide on its evidence to ban something without consulting with women who use this treatment or with the gynaecology profession, most of whom recommend it?"

Vitamin B6 aids the functioning of the heart, immune system, nervous system and brain. The recommended dietary allowances in Britain for B6 are 1.4mg a day for men, and 1.6mg for women. Some of the supplements on sale contain more than 50 times this amount in a single dose.

B6 has been recommended for conditions including asthma, heart disease, and depression. But it is mostly used in the treatment of pre-menstrual tension, to control acne and mood changes.

'I feel more energetic and more balanced'

Carolyn Larter began taking Vitamin B6 after asking her health food store to recommend a remedy for stress. She has been taking the 100mg pills for 18 months with no adverse effects.

"I had been finding that very little things were irritating me," Mrs Larter, 29, of Godalming, Surrey, said. "I would get cross about stupid things that went wrong at work. I would be in a bad mood for hours afterwards when it should have just passed." The pills, which contain a B complex of several vitamins, made a difference within a week. If large doses are outlawed, Mrs Larter fears that some doctors will be reluctant to prescribe B6 because GPs rely more on drugs. "If you go to the doctor and say you are feeling rather grumpy, he is more likely to suggest sedatives."

Mrs Larter, a firm believer in complementary remedies, spends £30 a month on natural treatments including vitamin C and E, calcium, magnesium, chromium, zinc and folic acid. She has found a job as an office administrator for an alternative therapy business. "I feel a lot more energetic, a lot more balanced, and I have got more vitality. My friends that I don't see so often have noticed the difference and say how well I look. They say that I glow."

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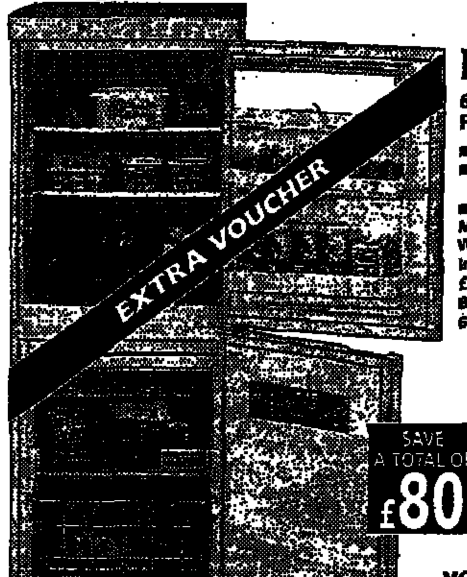

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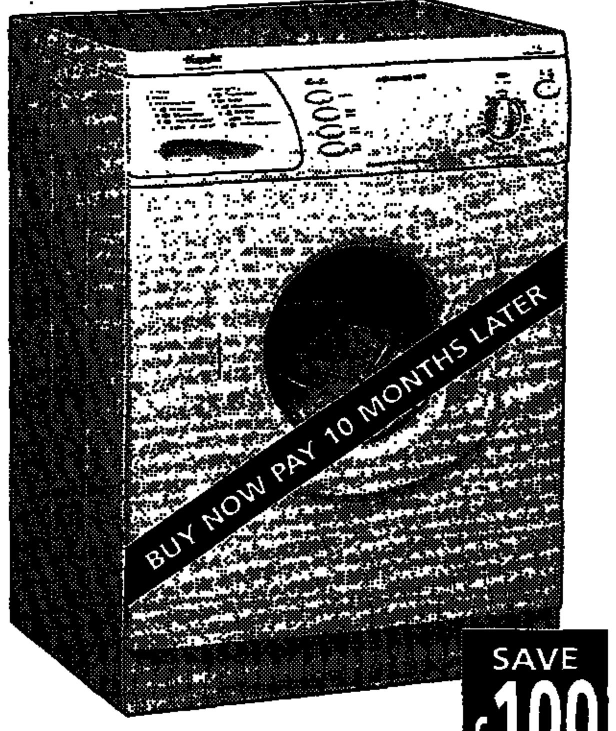

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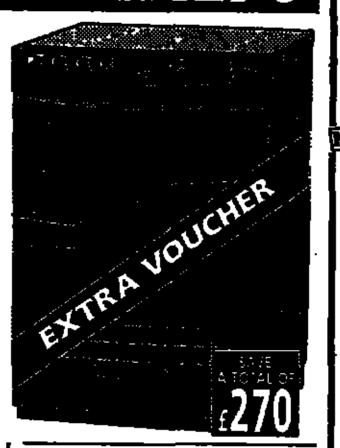

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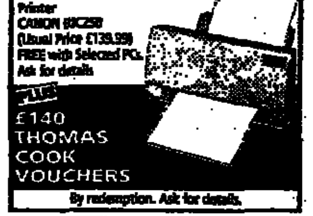

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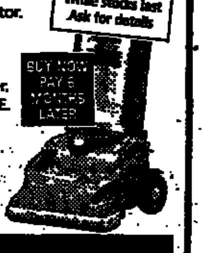

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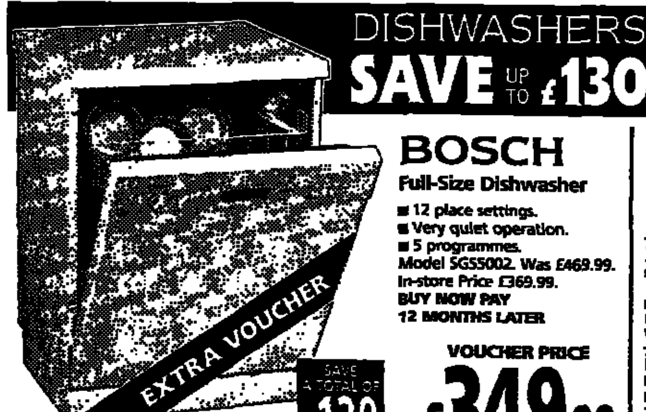

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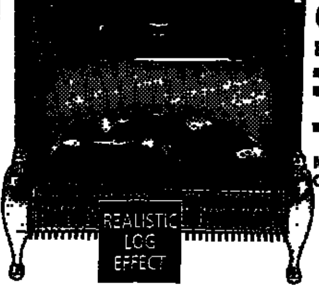

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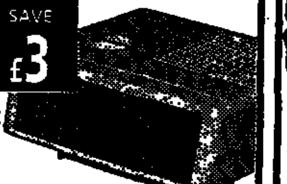

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هكذا من الأجل

هكذا من الأصل

Iranian fans herald popular revolution

Football poses a new threat to the might of the mullahs, writes

Michael Theodoulou from Tehran

REZA, a young Iranian student relaxing with friends at a café in snow-covered mountains north of Tehran, threw his LA Lakers baseball cap into the air and whistled with delight. "So we have got America in the first round? Great, I hope we beat them, but as you English say, may the best team win."

News was just coming in of Thursday night's draw for next year's World Cup finals that puts Iran in the same group as the country Iranians are officially encouraged to despise most. There could have been few better ways to prolong the football fever that has gripped Iran since the national's team eleventh-hour qualification last Saturday.

"Down with America," Shiva, a young woman in Reza's group who was wearing turquoise-tinted contact lenses, said mockingly. Not since the Shah was forced into exile 18 years ago were there scenes of such jubilation on the streets of Tehran as when Iran beat Australia on the away-goals rule to clinch a place in the finals in France. Millions of men and women, who are meant to be segregated, brought traffic to a halt in the city's thoroughfares as they danced until the early hours. Some women, ignoring the strict dress code, jettisoned their headscarves to the dismay of police, apparently powerless to intervene.

One paper reported that 15 people suffered fatal heart attacks while the match was being played in Melbourne. Pictures of the scorers, Khordad Azizi and Karim Bagheri, now festoon Tehran's taxis and are plastered on the bedrooms walls of millions of Iranian boys.

The moderate press was delighted at the display of national unity on the streets and compared the "explosion of happiness" to the euphoria that followed May's surprise presidential election victory of Muhammad Khatami, who congratulated the players in person on Thursday. He was swept to power with 70 per cent of the vote by a broad front of young people, women and intellectuals attracted by his message of open-minded tolerance.

Indeed, many political analysts here doubt such celebrations could have taken place without the more liberal social climate created by Mr Khatam's victory.

"The celebrations were a show of people's power," said Ibrahim Yazdi, who heads a small, tolerated opposition party. "It marked a social and political development in Iran."

A European diplomat agreed: "It is a sign that civic society has become more confident, and a reminder to the old guard that people want Iran to be more open to the outside world."

> ❛ It is a reminder to the old guard that people want a more open Iran ❜

There was no indication that Iran hoped to settle old scores on the football pitches of France. "The meaning of FIFA [football's world governing body] is peace and unity," said Darius Mustafavi, president of the Iranian football federation. "We are thinking only of soccer, not politics. We are friends of the people of the USA."

☐ **Washington:** The game in Lyons on June 21 will be watched with as much fervour by the US State Department and the Iranian Foreign Ministry as it will by enthusiastic fans (Tom Rhodes writes).

Alan Rothenberg, president of the US football federation, said the only way the match could be given greater resonance would be the appointment of an Iraqi referee.

"We're going to try not to let the political ramifications influence our preparation. I hope we can use this game to bring the two countries closer together. Maybe we can have soccer diplomacy, like we had pingpong diplomacy in China."

Leading article, page 23
Danny Baker, page 34
Steve Macmanaman, page 39

JAMSHID BAYRAMI / AFP

Thousands of young Iranian women who forced their way into the Azadi stadium in Tehran cheer the national team on its triumphant return from Australia

Honoured heroes defy Khomeini's curse

Since Iran's underdogs drew with Scotland in 1978, only the blind or foolish dismiss their football, writes **Rob Hughes**

IRANIAN soccer has come a long way since Ayatollah Khomeini denounced and disbanded the national league as "an addictive product of the West" two decades ago. No team has scored more goals in qualifying for this World Cup or played to bigger crowds than the 128,000 at Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

The chants have grown like a new storm in the East though, as any Scotsman will tell you, Iran has been to a World Cup before. In 1978 in Argentina, Scotland drew 1-1 with the then underdogs from Iran. Then, as now, only the blind or the foolish dismiss Iranians. Their football is neat and swift along the ground in a sport where the gap between developed and emerging states is shrinking.

One date from the 1998 World Cup stands out — Sunday, June 21, in Lyons where Iran meet the USA. From a security and a sporting aspect, it will be unprecedented. Americans who vowed not to allow Iran into their country if the Islamic country had qualified for the last World Cup, must live with the thought that this represents the best chance either team has of a victory. They are drawn in Group F with Germany, the perennial achievers, and Yugoslavia, who have picked up where they left off as the "European Brazilians" of soccer.

Indeed, Iran seemed to sense immediately they qualified, that they were destined to meet America. "We are not going to war with any country," commented Dariush Mostafavi, president of Iran's Football Association. "We would be happy to play the USA. We are not enemies with the people there ... football can show what the revolution stands for: peace and friendship."

Americans, too, have a precedent of putting aside differences in the name of sport. Forty years ago Mike Agassi was an Olympic boxer for Iran; nowadays his son Andre, born and bred in Las Vegas, is an all-American tennis player.

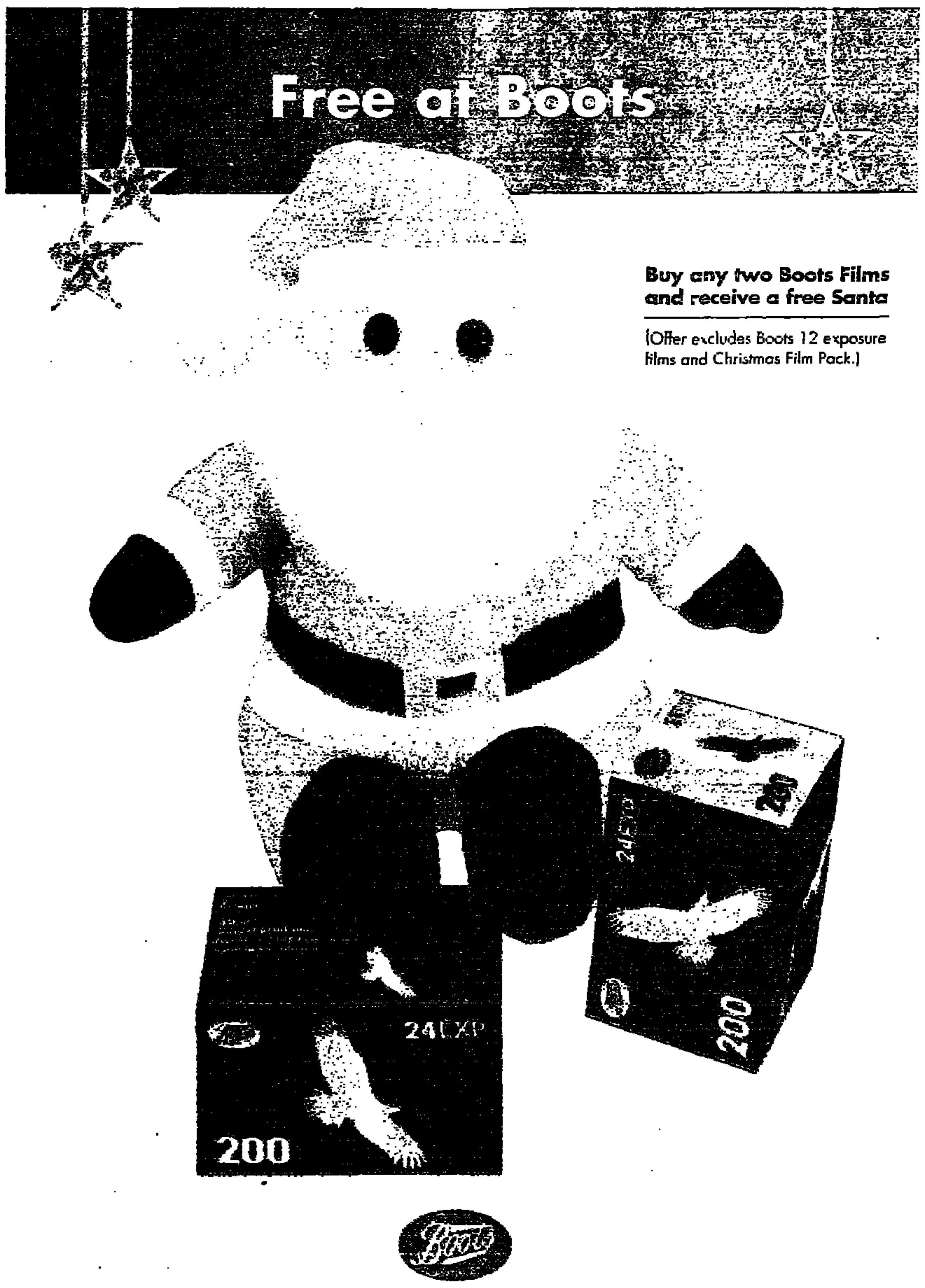
And today, like most other parts of the world where winning and losing at soccer crosses the boundaries of class, culture or creed, Iran has a hired foreign coach, and benefits from its star players expressing themselves in Europe's wealthy leagues.

"I am the happiest man in the world to help Iran qualify," said Valdeir Vieira, who journeyed from Brazil to guide Iran through just one month ago. "I know what this means to the 70 million people here. They needed this pride more than they need food or drink because, apart from their culture and their religion, they have nothing else."

You might make an exception of Khodadad Azizi, the Asian footballer of 1996, because he has the wealth and satisfaction of playing for FC Cologne in the German Bundesliga. Similarly, Karim Bagheri and Ali Daei, two outstanding goal-scorers, who are professionals with Germany's Arminia Bielefeld.

"Iran is the place to buy for value for money," insists Rüdiger Lamm, the Bielefeld general manager. "These forwards are such good talents, its hard to understand why they are not one of the top national teams."

The Iranians have a new coach, the Brazilian Vieira. "This country has been closed for 20 years, that is why they love football so much," he said. "I know it because I come from a country where people have killed themselves if the team did not get the right result."



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Campaigning actor plays off Broadway

JAMES BONE'S NEW YORK

ALEC BALDWIN is bringing the same gusto to his nascent political career as he does to the screen.

The star of *The Hunt for Red October* and *Glengarry Glen Ross* went on the road last week to lobby for campaign finance reform, rally for breast cancer research and denounce a leaking nuclear reactor near his home in the Hamptons on eastern Long Island.

In political terms, he is still playing off Broadway, but it may not be long before we see his name in lights. Mr Baldwin, a trendy leftie who heads the group of Hollywood politicos known as the Creative Coalition, revealed recently that he coveted the job of Governor of New York and might prepare himself with a run for the Senate.

"Mother said he'd be President," his sister revealed. As Mr Baldwin prepared to foray forth on board a rented campaign bus, his handlers pestered three separate reporters from *The New Republic* political weekly to pitch the story. It was worth the effort: they eventually scored the cover article.

Unlike his Hollywood confrères, Mr Baldwin does not just talk about Bosnia and Tibet and the rainforests. He positively relishes the nitty-gritty. The heartthrob told an earnest audience of ladies at a midtown Manhattan YWCA: "We are now positioned to have a truly great and well-examined and meaningful campaign finance reform."

This is, remember, the same man charged and acquitted two years ago for punching a paparazzo who tried to get a shot of his wife, Kim Basinger, and their newborn child. Mr Baldwin continues to be fiercely protective. When *The New York Times* made a snide reference to the blonde bombshell "behaving temperamentally" on the set of her new movie, *Marrying Man*, he fired off a furious letter to the reporter, Bernard Weinraub. The newspaper declined to publish it, but somehow it made its way into the public domain.

"Why don't you do yourself, *The New York Times*, and everybody else in this business a favour: either become a better, braver, more ethical writer or quit your [expletive deleted] job and go work for a studio, since that is basically what you are doing right now," Mr Baldwin's protest ran.

Ooh-la-la.

THE social event of next week is undoubtedly the Versace gala at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Word is that Madonna will give a private performance amid the Egyptian Temples. There has been a kerfuffle, however, over whether to issue an invitation to Shane Perdue, who plays the fashion designer's killer in an upcoming film. He appears not to have made it. The fear was that guests would be discomfited by an Andrew Cunanan-lookalike.

A TEACHER tells me that schoolchildren have begun wearing badges, baseball caps and even T-shirts emblazoned with the legend "4:20". This is apparently the time after classes finish for the day that kids gather to get high on marijuana. It is known as "National Get-Stoned Time".

NINA BERMAN / SIPA PRESS

Financing reform is top of the agenda as Alec Baldwin goes canvassing in Massachusetts

Yearning for bad old days

THE "Crossroads of the World" is getting over-populated. As Disney and Madame Tussaud's replace the grimy porn cinemas of Times Square, right, the junction of Broadway and 42nd Street is being flooded by tourists. A study says that at peak periods 7,000 people pass a given point every hour. New Yorkers walk 30 per cent faster than out-of-towners, so there are lots of opportunity for typical New York hospitality ("Yo! Ged-oud-a-da-way"). The crush may explain why an increasing number of Manhattanites feel nostalgic for the old red-light district.

☐ *Somebody has come up with a way to stop New York's cabbies from speeding: fix the meter so that it cuts out above the 30mph limit. Customers in a hurry could still agree a price in advance and let the driver rush to the destination with the meter switched off — as long as they are willing to pay the fine.*

Making a meal of crime

MY PROSPEROUS friends in the commuter town of Greenwich, Connecticut, are living in fear of the so-called "dinnertime bandits". Burglars normally choose an hour when the occupants are likely to be out of the house. Statistically, Wednesday afternoon is the most popular time. Some audacious thieves raid houses during dinner parties, however, entering the first floor while everyone is downstairs. So far, 21 homes have been hit. One family was robbed while entertaining 30 guests. Just like *To Catch A Thief.*

☐ The latest home improvement — "safe rooms" — is of dubious benefit against such sociable thieves. Security-conscious Americans are building hidden bunkers inside their homes. Wealthy homeowners apparently fear being held hostage by robbers or being killed. Some keep a refrigerator fully stocked inside and even stockpile weapons.

Rush for cameras to spy on nannies

THE hottest item in New York shops is the "Nannycam". These spy cameras have been flying off the shelves since Louise Woodward was convicted of killing the baby in her care. One store offers 47 varieties, with the cheapest selling for $299 (£180).

A concerned father on Long Island installed one last Sunday after a neighbour warned him that his "Dial-a-Maid" babysitter had been screaming at his two-year-old daughter in the playground.

Four days later Maria Darrosa, 28, was arrested after being caught on tape sexually abusing the toddler.

An acquaintance who hired two Swedish au pairs from the same agency that imported Miss Woodward reports that both she and her live-in help have been receiving regular letters from E. F. Au Pair.

Carey Bloom, of Princeton, says the letters plead the British nanny's case. The latest came after her conviction, and again protested her innocence.

"It's scary when it's the same agency you used yourself. It hits home a little more," the mother of two says. "They had to send us something."

Like many mothers in America, Mrs Bloom recently gave up her job at a hospital to spend all her time with her children.

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White student in US sues on 'race bias' admissions

From Tom Rhodes in Washington

A WHITE woman is suing the University of Michigan in a case fast becoming the lightning rod in a conservative battle to rid American colleges of race-based admissions.

Jennifer Gratz, vice-president of the student council, a cheerleader and homecoming queen at her high school in Detroit, was viewed as a natural candidate when she applied two years ago to the university's most famous campus at Ann Arbor, Michigan. She had earned a 3.9 average score in examinations in which the top grade was four, and was a model student.

But her application was declined and Miss Gratz, 20, is suing the state's most prestigious university claiming she was rejected in favour of black, Hispanic and American Indian applicants with lower grades and test scores. She wants the courts to declare that the university's policy is unconstitutional.

"I feel I was racially discriminated against," said Miss Gratz, who is now studying mathematics at the neighbouring Michigan campus of Dearborn. "I believe I deserved an equal chance but didn't get it. I'm not suing for admission, I'm suing so the policy will be changed."

In the last two years, two of America's biggest public universities, in Texas and California, have been forced to stop employing affirmative action programmes. Conservative opponents of affirmative action hope the Gratz case may persuade the thousands of other US colleges to follow suit. They describe the lawsuit as the best chance to overturn a 1978 ruling by the US Supreme Court which allowed universities to consider race as a factor in choosing students.

Miss Gratz is being represented by the Centre for Individual Rights, a Washington firm that became the legal force behind California's Proposition 209, the initiative which banned the use of racial preferences in the state.

At the heart of the suit is what conservatives call a smoking gun, a chart used by the university's admissions office to decide who qualifies for entrance and who does not. The document shows that white candidates are often rejected or deferred while minorities with identical exam results are admitted.

The university, accepting the existence of such a chart, said that race was only one of the factors used in selection. Officials have hired a top Washington law firm to defend the university.

Patrick Hamacher, another prospective candidate for Michigan, has also joined the suit. At the age of 18 and also white, he was rejected by the university last year when his application had seemed a foregone conclusion.

Call for warning on petrol adverts

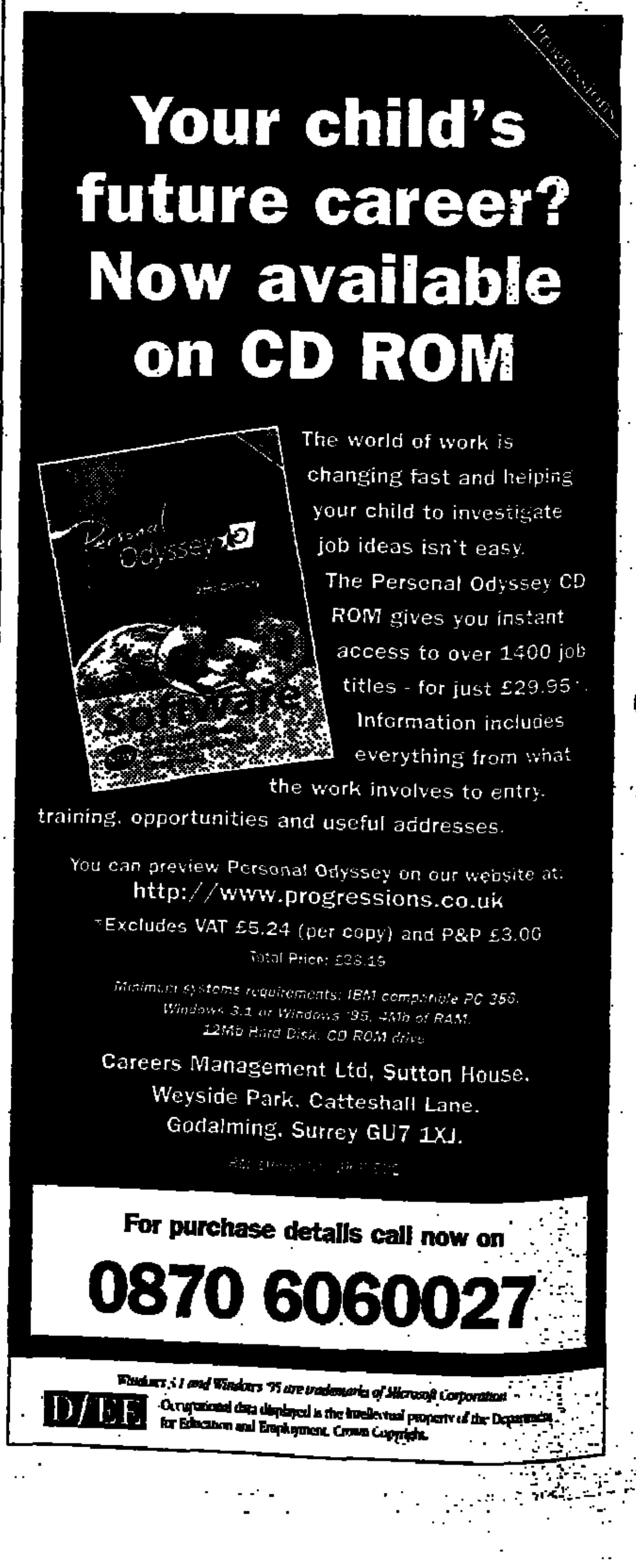
From Nick Nuttall in Kyoto

CIGARETTE-style health warnings should be attached to petrol and diesel advertisements to reflect oil's environmental damage, a leading British pensions and insurance company urged yesterday. NPI Global Care Investment, with assets of $18 billion, said the warnings were needed to alert the public to the threat of global warming, from burning fossil fuels in cars to home heating.

Tessa Tennant of the company told the Kyoto Climate Change Conference: "This is a precautionary measure which all governments can readily take." She said the warnings should, like tobacco ads, advise people about the direct health risks of breathing in fumes like carbon monoxide, soot particles and organic compounds like benzene.

But Ms Tennant said the warnings also needed to underscore the links between petrol and diesel and climate change with its risks of sea level rise, famine, spread of diseases and water shortages worldwide. She added: "An informed public is essential to the success of action plans to reduce man-made emissions."

The company's move came as 71 insurance and reinsurance firms launched a scheme to curb global warming under the United Nations environment programmes insurance initiative. It came with a warning that some big petrol corporations needed to mend their ways or face becoming corporate dinosaurs.



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French jails to build rooms for sex visits

From Ben Macintyre in paris

LOVE will bloom in French prisons under a new plan to build mini-apartments within penitentiaries where long-term prisoners will be allowed to have conjugal visits for the first time.

As in Britain, sexual relations are currently forbidden in French prisons, but under the outline project soon to be presented to the Justice Ministry by the prison service, so-called "family visiting spaces" will be set aside "to give long-term detainees the opportunity for family intimacy".

These private areas will "allow people incarcerated for a certain time to enjoy every aspect of family life, from preparing a meal to sleeping together to amorous relations", the Prisons Administration said in a report.

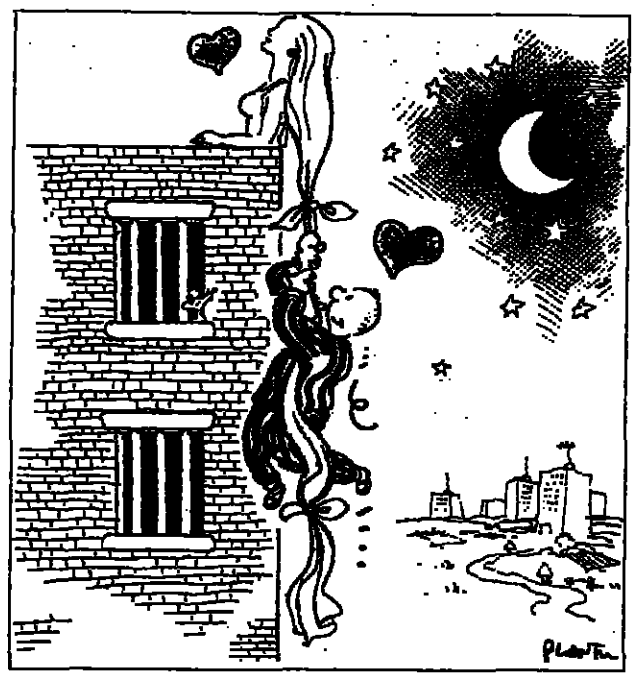
The secure, set-aside rooms will not be directly supervised by prison officers, and while sex will be permitted the report emphasised that "the principal intention is to maintain pre-existing family links, with the aim of returning prisoners to society".

The families of prisoners will be allowed to stay in the units for up to 72 hours.

The issue of conjugal visits in French prisons has been debated for more than a decade. A similar plan was considered in 1985 under Robert Badinter, the former Justice Minister, but was abandoned after objections from prison staff.

"The immense majority of officers are now in favour of setting up sex rooms, since the current situation is untenable," the Prisons Administration said in its report.

A recent survey found that, although sex is officially forbidden between prisoners and their partners, some 35 per cent of former detainees said they had had sex with their wives or girlfriends during visiting hours, with or without the connivance of the guards, and 2.5 per cent claimed to have conceived a child while in detention.



The escapist point of view of *Le Monde*'s cartoonist

The survey concluded that the official attitude towards sex between prisoners and their visitors varied widely between prisons, with some prison governors and officers "turning a blind eye" while others insisted on a rigorous application of the no-sex rule.

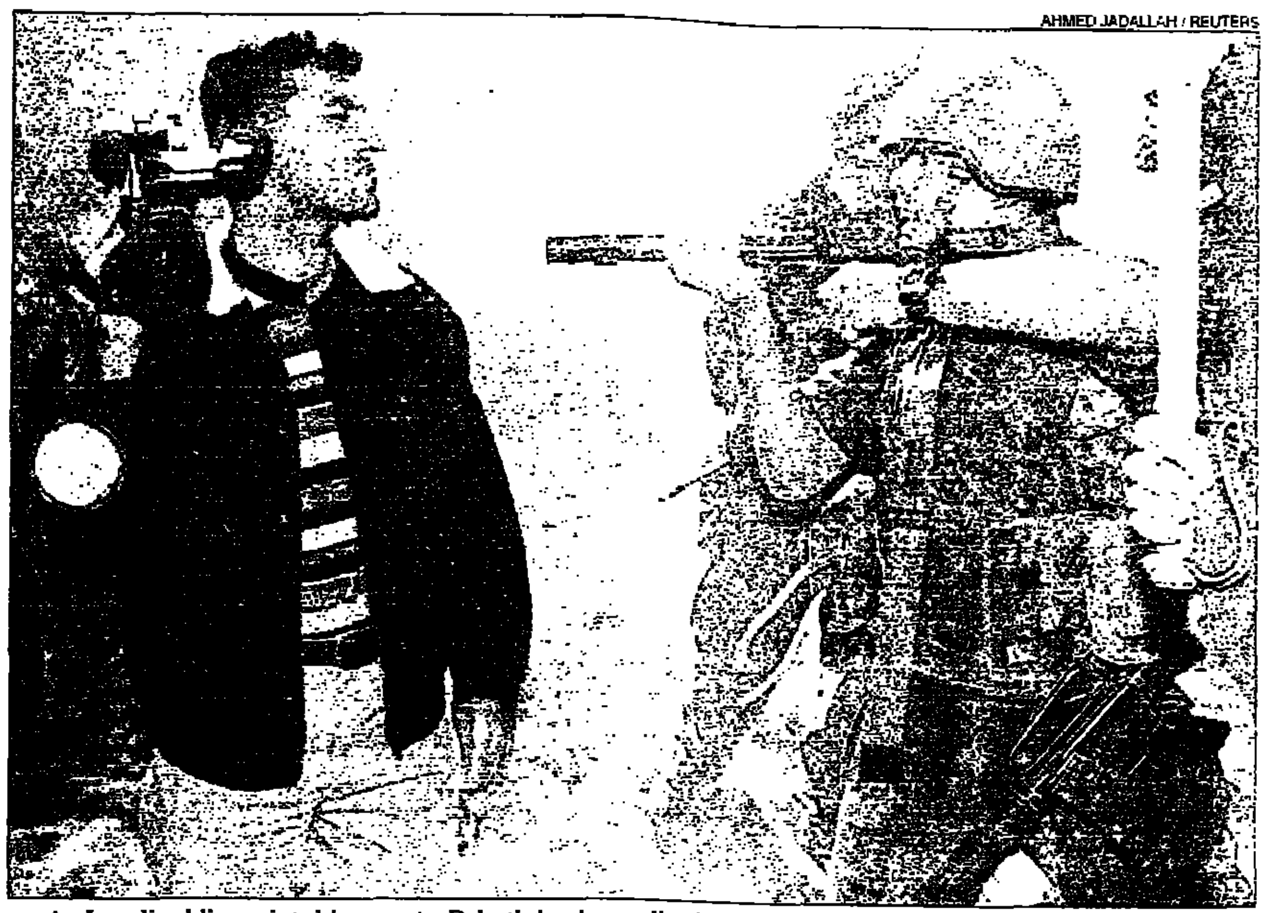
Last May the French section of the International Prisons Observatory launched a petition calling for prisoners to be granted the right to privacy.

Under the new plan the mini-apartments would consist of two small rooms, one for adults and another for children, alongside a kitchen eating area. Each apartment would be equipped with an intercom system to summon staff if necessary.

Visitors will be closely vetted and the new family units will be accompanied by stringent new security measures, according to the Prisons Administration. Each prisoner would be searched on entering and leaving the apartment, and visitors would also be subject to careful security checks on arrival at the prison.

If the project gets the go-ahead from Elisabeth Guigou, the Justice Minister, the first such units would be opened next year, and the prison service estimates that up to 15,000 long-term prisoners could benefit from the scheme.

AHMED JADALLAH / REUTERS



An Israeli soldier points his gun at a Palestinian journalist during demonstrations yesterday over a disputed plot of land at Rafah in the Gaza Strip. Israeli soldiers wounded five Palestinians, including a cameraman

Israel wants peace accord 'corrections'

From Christopher Walker
in Paduel,
occupied West Bank

A LEADING member of the Israeli Cabinet called yesterday for "adjustments and corrections" to the 1993 Oslo peace accord with the Palestinians and said that Israel would never relinquish security zones 30km (19 miles) wide on either side of the West Bank.

Ariel Sharon, one of four members of the "kitchen Cabinet" appointed by Binyamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, to determine Israel's position on its troop withdrawals, for the first time outlined the country's blueprint for any final settlement with the Palestinians.

Speaking in this Jewish settlement, he insisted that the newly designated security zones "were red lines, not pink", which Israel would never cross in final negotiations due to be completed by May 1999. He added that Israel would immediately annex the two proposed security zones, one 10km wide running east of the Green Line dividing Israel from the West Bank, and the other 20km wide along the Jordan Valley, if Yassir Arafat went ahead as threatened and unilaterally declared a Palestinian state.

Asked if he were not calling for the renegotiation of the peace treaty, he said with a twinkle in his eye: "I would not use exactly that term . . . but some corrections and adjustments must be made."

Yeltsin plea wins budget approval

From Richard Beeston
in Moscow

PRESIDENT Yeltsin yesterday made a dramatic intervention on the floor of the opposition-dominated parliament, when he successfully implored reluctant deputies to pass this year's budget and avert an economic crisis (Richard Beeston writes).

For only the second time since he came to power, the Russian leader made a surprise visit to the Duma, the lower house, giving a warning to members that the country and the world were waiting for their approval of next year's delayed budget.

"I ask you not to drag your feet but to vote for the budget at once," he said. "You are officials of a big world power which is introducing democracy, learning to live according to democratic principles."

Although Duma members normally spend most of their days attacking Mr Yeltsin, this time they applauded him obediently and within minutes Communists, democrats and nationalists alike passed the first reading of the budget by 231 votes to 136. "I am satisfied," President Yeltsin said as he left.

Princess to visit 'site of torture'

By Gabriella Gamini
South America
Correspondent

HUMAN rights activists in Paraguay last night expressed outrage at organisers who planned a visit by the Princess Royal to an ecological project on a farm which was allegedly used, as a torture centre during the dictatorship of General Alfredo Stroessner's between 1954 and 1989.

The Princess Royal, who is unaware that the hacienda where she is due to inspect a eucalyptus reforestation project is said to have once housed a notorious torture camp, arrived in Paraguay yesterday after a visit to Peru and Colombia.

She was scheduled to visit the 2,500-acre Tapta farm on which a local unit of the Royal Dutch Shell group has a reforestation project, within hours of her arrival in Asunción, the capital.

Francisco José de Vagas, a leading congressman, said: "It is outrageous that they are taking the British princess on a tour of a place which most people in Paraguay know was used by the military to torture and execute political opponents."

ScottishPower

Notice of an application for consent to construct and operate a Combined Heat and Power (CHP) Generating Station at the Sappi Europe Blackburn Mill in the district of Blackburn with Darwen, Lancashire (Grid Reference SD 646 248).

Notice is hereby given that ScottishPower plc has applied under Section 36 of the Electricity Act (1989) for the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry's consent to construct and operate a CHP plant at the Sappi Europe Blackburn Mill at Feniscowles, Lancashire, and for a direction under Schedule 8 of the Act stating that planning permission for the generating station be deemed to be granted.

The proposed generating station, to be known as Blackburn Mill CHP Plant, will have a total nominal output of 60MW.

A copy of the application; a plan showing the land to which it relates; an accompanying Environmental Review document and supporting information are available for inspection by members of the public at the following locations during normal office hours:

Planning Department, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Planning Department, Chorley Borough Council
Planning Department, Lancashire County Council

Copies of the Environmental Review and Non Technical Summary may also be inspected at ScottishPower's offices at: ScottishPower, 75 Waterloo Street, Glasgow G2 7BD.

Copies of the Environmental Review (£50 per copy) and Non Technical Summary (free, whilst available) can be obtained from the Environment & Planning Section, ScottishPower Technology, 45 Hawbank Road, College Milton North, East Kilbride, Glasgow G74 5EG.

Objections to the application should be made in writing to the President of the Board of Trade, Department of Trade and Industry, Electricity Directorate, I.D. 20, 1 Victoria Street, London SW10 0ET stating the name of the station and the grounds for objection before 31st December 1997 (28 days after submission). It is requested that a copy of any objection be posted to the Environment and Planning Section at the above address.

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Party chief guilty of plot to kill Mugabe

FROM JAN RAATH
IN HARARE

THE Rev Ndabaningi Sithole, the man credited with starting the war that ended white minority rule in Rhodesia, was yesterday found guilty of treason. The 77-year-old opposition leader faces a life jail sentence.

Judge Esmael Chatikobo convicted Sithole, leader of Zanu (Ndonga), the only opposition party in Zimbabwe's parliament, of plotting to kill President Mugabe by bombing his motorcade in August 1995. Sithole was also found guilty of helping to organise a guerrilla force in Mozambique that was to fight to overthrow Mr Mugabe's Government. The court also found he procured and kept weapons of war.

The judge accepted secret videotapes of a military co-operation agreement signed in 1986 in New York between Zanu (Ndonga) and Renamo, the former South African-backed guerrilla movement that is now Mozambique's main opposition party.

The former Congregational minister was in the same dock where he sat 29 years ago when a Rhodesian judge jailed him for six years for conspiring to kill Ian Smith, who was then the Rhodesian Prime Minister.

Judge Chatikobo said he would pass sentence later, while Sithole's lawyers indicated they would appeal against the judgement.

ANC women to withdraw poll backing for Winnie

FROM SAM KILEY IN JOHANNESBURG

THE political ambitions of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela face a big setback this weekend when the African National Congress Women's League is expected to withdraw its support for her candidacy in elections this month for the party's deputy presidency.

After eight days of harrowing details about a "reign of terror" waged by Mrs Mandela, mainly against young men and women in Soweto during the late 1980s, Women's League sources said yesterday that they now expected to nominate Jacob Zuma for the post.

Mrs Mandela has also lost the backing of ANC members in the Eastern Cape, the party's most radical area. They have dropped her from their list of nominees in favour of Mr Zuma, the uncharismatic party chairman from KwaZulu/Natal, who now has the backing of all nine provinces. His candidature is also supported by senior members of the party who are anxious to improve the showing of Zulus in the leadership before peace talks with the Zulu-dominated Inkatha Freedom Party of Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi expected early next year.

Some of Mrs Mandela's supporters chanted songs outside the Truth and Reconciliation Committee hearings this week while accusations of murder and torture were being made against her inside. Others threatened the mother of one of her alleged victims. Analysts said Mrs Mandela was by no means finished. She retains a following among rank-and-file members who have rallied to her campaign to reinstate the death penalty and her criticism of the ANC for failing to live up to its election promises.

But their voices may be drowned by the party's top brass. Cheryl Carolus, the acting Secretary-General, has condemned her attacks on the ANC as cowardly. Although Mrs Mandela is president of the Women's League, sources said that members had been "shocked by what came out of the hearings", during which she was implicated in at least six murders.

Mrs Mandela still inspires an almost supernatural sense of fear. None of the ANC Women's League sources would allow their names to be used.

At the end of the hearings, a vague and reluctant apology for her reign of terror was dragged from Mrs Mandela by a tearful Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the commission chairman, although she refused to acknowledge any responsibility.

Archbishop Tutu said yesterday: "I think it would be unfortunate if we were to be dismissive .fs2.. Let us not snuff out a flickering wick."

Leading article, page 23

MIKE HUTCHINGS / REUTERS

P. W. Botha: threatened with arrest if he defies truth commission

WORLD IN BRIEF

Britain lifts jobs ban on islanders

London: Bowing to pressure from Britain's most remote possession, the British Government announced yesterday that it will allow up to 30 islanders from St Helena to take full-time paid jobs in this country (Michael Binyon writes). Five people from Tristan da Cunha, the lonely volcanic island inhabited by no more than 300 people, will also be allowed to seek employment here.

Tony Lloyd, the Foreign Office minister, made the announcement at a business forum intended to bolster investment in St Helena. The new quota, although low, lifts the ban on residents of the South Atlantic dependent territory working in Britain, which followed the removal of their British citizenship in 1981.

Volcano diverts planes

Moscow: A Russian volcano situated on the Pacific Rim's "Ring of Fire" erupted yesterday, spewing ashes five miles high and forcing US airlines to change their flight paths. American satellites showed a 60-mile trail of ash from the Bezymyany volcano on the sparsely populated Kamchatka Peninsula in Russia's Far East. Flights between Russia and Alaska pass over Kamchatka. The eruption posed no immediate threat to the nearest communities. It was the second eruption this year of the 9,412ft Bezymyany, which dusted the region with ash last May. *(AP)*

UN troops leave Haiti

Miami: United Nations peacekeeping troops have begun leaving Haiti, three years after they arrived to help build democratic rule in the wake of a United States-led invasion to restore President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power (David Adams writes). The country has been without a functioning government for months due to a power struggle between legislators loyal to Mr Aristide and a former Prime Minister, Rosny Smarth. The capital, Port-au-Prince, is alive with allegations and rumours of coup and assassination plots.

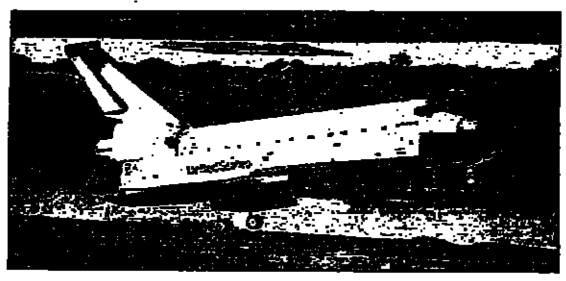
Killer jailed for 2,410 years

Pretoria: A man has been sentenced to a total of 2,410 years for raping and murdering dozens of women in the Johannesburg area over a period of nearly a decade. Moses Sithole, 33, who was convicted of 38 murders, 40 rapes and six robberies, would be eligible for parole in 950 years. Judge David Curlewis said that, if given the option, he would have passed a death sentence. Capital punishment was ended by the post-apartheid Constitution. *(AP)*

Basques retaliate with bomb

San Sebastián: Eta gunmen shot and seriously wounded a local politician's bodyguard and exploded a car bomb in apparent retaliation for the jailing of the leaders of their political wing. Violence erupted only hours before 23 leaders of the radical Basque separatist party Herri Batasuna were arrested to begin serving seven-year prison sentences for collaborating with the guerrillas. *(Reuters)*

Shuttle crew faces inquiry



The *Columbia* space shuttle makes its descent to the runway at the Kennedy Space Centre in Cape Canaveral, Florida, yesterday after a two-week science mission. The astronauts face an inquiry because of a botched satellite release. Nasa Mission Control skipped the customary congratulations after *Columbia* and its crew of six landed safely. *(AP)*

Swiss pay wartime victims

Basle: Swiss banks made the first payouts to Holocaust victims in a campaign to clear accounts dormant since the Second World War. No details were given. Some 6,000 claims have been filed since July, when bankers published worldwide a first list of names on dormant accounts. *(AP)*

Legal slip reprieve for Botha

Johannesburg: P. W. Botha, the former South African President, yesterday narrowly escaped being charged with failing to appear before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission because of a blunder by its lawyers (Sam Kiley writes).

Commissioners, including Archbishop Desmond Tutu, marched to the Cape Town Attorney-General's offices to lay a charge against "the Great Crocodile", only to be told that as the subpoena summoning Mr Botha, 81, did not specify a time, it was invalid. A second, correct, version of the document was taken to George, Mr Botha's retirement home, where he will be ordered to attend hearings on December 19. The legal fiasco will slow down the hearings.

Frank Khan, the Western Cape Attorney-General, issued a warning that he would not hesitate to issue a warrant if Mr Botha ignored the third summons.

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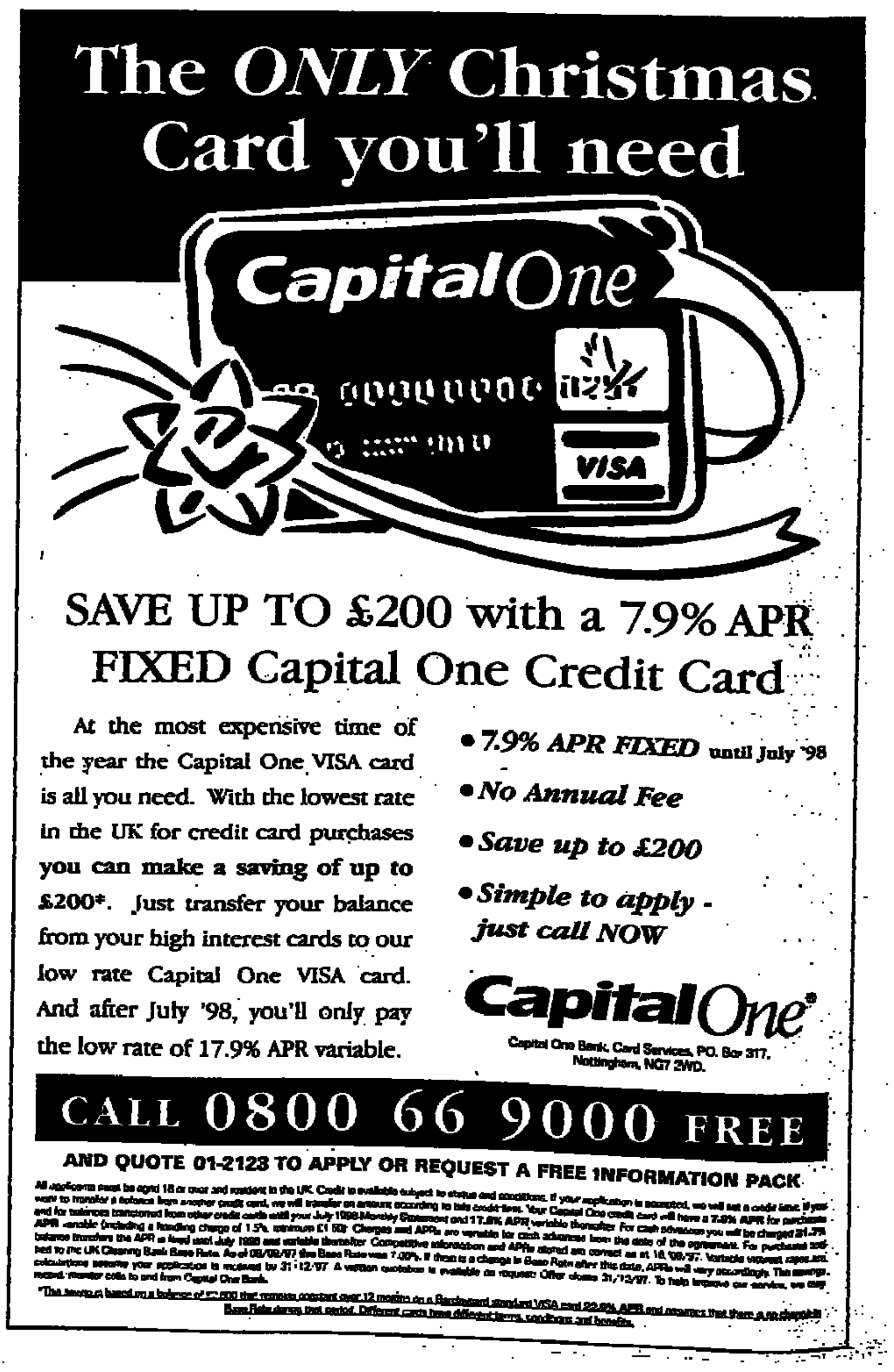

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Record sentence for animal rights bomber

By Simon de Bruxelles

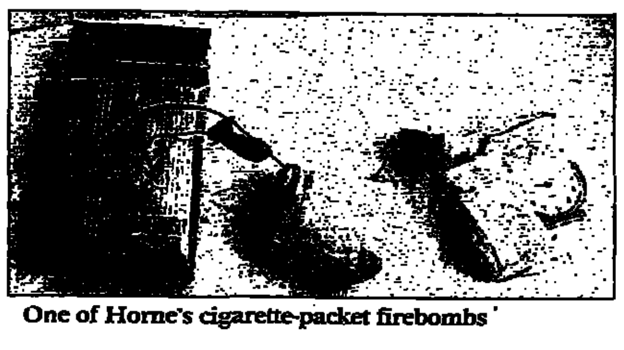
AN ANIMAL-rights bomber who carried out arson attacks on stores across the South of England was jailed for 18 years yesterday. It is believed to be the longest sentence for an animal-rights extremist.

Barry Horne, 45, described by the judge as an urban terrorist and by police as "dangerous, ruthless and absolutely committed", caused millions of pounds of damage to shops on the Isle of Wight in 1994.

He used disguises and was not caught until two years later, when detectives acting on a tip-off arrested him as he planted incendiary devices in shops at Bristol. Judge Simon Darwall Smith told Horne yesterday: "This was urban terrorism for a particular cause and objective. You put communities in terror. But I do accept you did not intend an attack on human life."

Last month Horne was found guilty on four charges of arson, five of attempted arson and one of possessing bomb-making equipment. He had earlier admitted two charges of attempted arson and two of possession of articles with intent to damage property.

Horne punched the air in defiance as he was sentenced and cheering animal rights supporters banged on the windows of the public gallery at Bristol Crown Court. The court was told that Horne, who gave an address in Northampton, had previous convictions for similar offences.


One of Horne's cigarette-packet firebombs

After his release from prison on a charge of possessing incendiary bombs, he began planting firebombs in shops at Ryde and Newport on the Isle of Wight. In one night he caused so much damage that the island's emergency services called in reinforcements from the mainland.

His targets included a Boots store in Newport, which was destroyed at an estimated cost of £2.8 million. Other targets included a fishing tackle shop, Halfords and Cancer Research shops, which were badly damaged in simultaneous explosions.

In January 1995, detectives raided Horne's temporary home at Swindon, Wiltshire, where they found an article bragging about terror campaigns carried out by animal rights extremists. The piece, entitled *1994 — Fighting and Winning*, said: "What an excellent year 1994 was: a year in which we fought back and inflicted losses on animal abusers."

Horne was arrested in July 1996 in Broadmead shopping centre, Bristol by detectives from the South East Regional Crime Squad, who had been following him for more than a month. He had been seen placing incendiary devices in two stores. When he was searched, four devices were found inside the lining of his jacket. He had put tape around his fingertips to avoid leaving prints.

Detectives found 18 more devices, each using a watch face, battery, theatrical maroon flare and incendiary powder mix stuffed into a cigarette packet. The firebombs were primed and ready to explode. Linda Jones, an explosives expert who gave evidence at the Oklahoma and World Trade Centre bombing trials in America, told the court that most of the bombs were viable and had been designed by one person, or a small group "working closely together to a common plan".

Horne, who is unemployed, did not give evidence or call witnesses during the seven-day trial. In mitigation, Alistair Edie told the court that he never placed devices near residential properties and that all were timed to go off late at night.

He said: "Mr Horne is not a ruthless and dangerous man. He is not a Mr Big. He is not a Lenin of the animal liberation movement, nor an urban terrorist."

Detective Chief Inspector Roy Lambert, who headed the investigation, said after the case: "Horne is a very dangerous and ruthless man absolutely committed to his cause. We are very pleased at the sentence.

"We believe we have saved Bristol and other cities from horrendous fire-bombing campaigns. This man was not going to let anything come in his way."

After Horne had been found guilty, the court was told that he had convictions from 1988 to 1995 for offences carried out during his campaign.

Horne at a blood sports protest. The judge described him as an urban terrorist

Doctors who fail to give patients the needle

By Ian Murray
Medical Correspondent

MANY junior doctors have never been taught to use a local anaesthetic, according to a study of the pain involved in supplying a blood sample.

Eighty-four per cent of the doctors never gave a local anaesthetic before sticking a needle into an artery even though this is recommended as best practice. A hundred junior doctors at hospitals round the country took part in the trial, which was co-ordinated by St James University Hospital in Leeds: one quarter had not been taught how to administer a local anaesthetic.

Nearly half the doctors said they thought the local anaesthetic was as painful to administer as taking the blood sample. Twelve per cent felt the procedure took too long and 8 per cent felt it made matters too complicated.

The findings showed that patients given an anaesthetic experienced less pain than those who had been given a placebo and those given no injection, and the doctors rated the procedure only slightly harder. Reporting the trial for the *Journal of the Royal College of Physicians*, Mark Elliott, consultant chest physician at Killingbeck Hospital Leeds, writes: "The myths that local anaesthetic makes the procedure more difficult and is as painful as arterial puncture should be dispelled."

Couple lose failed vasectomy claim

By Richard Duce

A HIGH Court judge yesterday rejected the "sad" case of a couple who had unwanted twins after the husband's vasectomy failed.

Andrew and Louise Fulleylove, of Stevenage, Hertfordshire, blamed the strain of bringing up twins, while already caring for three other children, for the break-up of their marriage.

Mr Fulleylove, 36, and his wife, 33, had hoped to buy a new house and she had intended to return to work. But those plans were wrecked by the birth of Nathan and Jessica in August 1992. The couple's sex life was also ruined, they said, because Mrs Fulleylove no longer felt safe, and they separated in October 1994.

Mr Fulleylove claimed that the £72 vasectomy in June 1991 had not been done properly by Dr Michael Duggan, a local GP, who denied negligence. He also claimed that a semen analysis, three months later, which showed no sperm was present, was wrong and that he was not warned of the risk of spontaneous re-canalisation which would make him fertile again.

But Deputy Judge Mark Strachan, QC, said: "Mr and Mrs Fulleylove have the court's every sympathy, but on the question of legal responsibility I'm afraid it's quite clear that none of the bases of the claim have been made out."

The doctor, who had conducted up to 50 such procedures before he saw Mr Fulleylove, had also correctly analysed the semen sample to be free of sperm. His consent form for the operation, which the Fulleyloves signed, indicated that no guarantee of permanent sterility was given. The judge made a costs order against the couple, who were legally aided.

They had claimed £150,000 for bringing up the twins until maturity and damages for the distress and trauma caused by the unwanted pregnancy.

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THE CASE OF THE POLITICIANS' FAVOURITE POLICEMAN

Robocop counts down from zero

RICHARD RAYNER/NORTH NEWS

Working out: Mr Mallon has spent the week keeping fit. He is barred from talking about the accusations

Stewart Tendler and **Paul Wilkinson** on the low point of a high-profile policeman

Ray Mallon always knew his own profession hated the idea that any policeman should be fêted by politicians and followed by television cameras. This weekend as he sits at home, suspended from duty on disciplinary charges he dismisses as specious, Superintendent Mallon must wonder whether he is yet another high-profile policeman who is a victim of his own success.

During the election campaign, Tony Blair insisted on being photographed with the detective who was the self-declared advocate of "zero tolerance", an idea imported from America that advocates showing as little leniency to litter louts and drunks as it does to armed robbers.

Spin doctors embraced a British law enforcer who spoke in soundbites. The media nicknamed him Robocop. When he was appointed head of Middlesbrough CID, he pledged to resign if he could not cut crime by 20 per cent in 18 months. Before the year was out, he had cut it by more than a quarter, and didn't care if his methods were derided by fellow officers.

He knew the prevailing "canteen culture" in the force would always be suspicious and jealous of officers who tried something different. Now he is silenced by an investigation that could last a year. Suspended six days ago in a corruption investigation by Cleveland police, he spent his week running and swimming. If the most serious allegations are proved — that he turned a blind eye to suspicions that his detectives were offering heroin to prisoners in return for confessions — he could be jailed.

Mr Mallon is not permitted to talk about the accusations. His superiors have even gagged him from continuing his weekly newspaper column in *The Northern Echo*. They should know that his lawyers say that Mr Mallon is ready to fight and expose petty jealousies and rivalries within his profession. His lawyers may seek a High Court injunction next week to overturn the suspension. His wife, Carole, is considering an invitation from breakfast television to champion his cause.

Mr Mallon, 43, knew last Monday when he was summoned to the office of Bob Turnbull, an Assistant Chief Constable of Cleveland, that it meant trouble. He took a lawyer with him. At 1pm he walked into Mr Turnbull's first-floor office at police headquarters, ten minutes' drive from his own station. A few minutes later, he left with four Regulation Seven discipline forms. Across town, Mrs Mallon heard the news of his suspension on the radio in the dentist's surgery as she took their daughters Victoria, 16, and Lois, 13 for a check-up. She said: "Victoria looked at me and I looked at her. We could not believe it. They were suggesting Ray, my husband and her dad, was a criminal. It was wrong, all wrong. I didn't know whether to scream there and then in the treatment room. I wanted to get out. I wanted to get in the car and get home, away from it all. It was like it wasn't real."

> ❛ Families call him the best thing since sliced bread. Criminals send hate mail ❜

Mr Mallon's superiors called a press conference to announce that some of the allegations involved Operation Lancet, which was investigating two Middlesbrough detectives allegedly swapping drugs for information. The claims implicated an officer who, less than two months ago, was lauded by Richard Brunstrom, another Assistant Chief Constable, when he announced the suspension of Detective Constables Sean Allen and Brendan Whitehead.

Cleveland's head of CID, Chief Superintendent Keith Pitt, who was running the corruption investigation, added: "Ray Mallon shook the trees and I picked up the coconuts." Now he is investigating Robocop.

The Times has been told the allegations against Mr Mallon. It is claimed that he was the source for a story in the Newcastle *Journal* last month about three Cleveland officers facing a disciplinary inquiry after allegedly getting drunk and abusive on holiday in Crete. Local media sources suggest the source of the story was a phone call from a member of the public.

The second charge claims that Mr Mallon told a journalist about a disciplinary charge against a senior detective in his unit nine years previously. In the third case, he allegedly gave details of the drugs-for-confessions case to a reporter.

The fourth accusation is said to be that he suppressed information about the two suspended detectives six months before they were removed from duty. Friends say that the drugs allegations were investigated by another officer, who told Mr Mallon there was nothing to pursue. This is the most dangerous charge he faces. The other issues could be dealt with by the force, but Mallon might be prosecuted for this allegation.

His enemies loathe him for his fanatical approach to policing. A few years ago, no one would have believed that a middle-ranking detective from a provincial force on £41,000 a year could sow so much division.

Born and raised in Stockton-on-Tees, Mr Mallon is the son of an undertaker. He left school without qualifications and in 1974 became one of the first recruits to the newly created Cleveland force. Parts of Durham and North Yorkshire were fused with Teesside to cover some of the most deprived areas in Britain.

Hartlepool was a prime example. When Mallon became Detective Chief Inspector in April 1994, crime was up 37 per cent for the year with a 30 per cent increase in burglaries. In two years, reported crime was cut by more than a quarter.

Last year the local newspaper said: "Families in Hartlepool call him the best thing since sliced bread — criminals send him hate mail — but love him or hate him, Ray Mallon is unlikely to be forgotten."

Mr Mallon demanded total commitment from his officers. He told them to stop people dropping litter, spitting and other antisocial crimes, to reinforce the message that no crime would be tolerated. At the top end, he identified key criminals who were targeted.

Mallon might have remained a successful player in a minor league but for the fact

Continued on facing page

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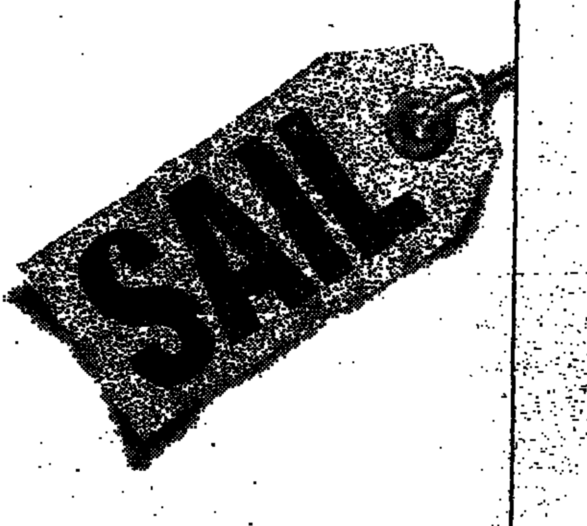

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TIM 3

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THE CASE OF THE POLITICIANS' FAVOURITE POLICEMAN

RAOUL DIXON

Ray Mallon at a press conference on the suspension of two officers

CARL RUTHERFORD

Bob Turnbull, the Assistant Chief Constable, speaks on Mr Mallon's suspension. Carole Mallon, right, heard the news while she was at the dentist with their children. She said: "We could not believe it. It was wrong, all wrong. It was like it wasn't real"

Continued from facing page

fact that his success coincided with the discovery by British politicians of Bill Bratton. Commissioner of the New York Police and advocate of zero tolerance. Like Mr Mallon. Bratton believed in driving his officers to retake the streets.

No one is now clear whether Mr Mallon imitated Bratton or whether they found the strategy independently. but in the summer of 1996 Bratton came to Britain and visited Hartlepool for a television programme. In the general election. politicians beat a path to Mr Mallon's door. Tony Blair brought along Helen Mirren, star of TV's *Prime Suspect*, for an election photocall with Mr Mallon. Michael Howard said he was his "kind of cop".

He cut the numbers of his own CID department. Stop searches of suspects in the street quadrupled, and CS gas was used more by the Cleveland force than any other in Britain. His strategy was now called Here and Now. He announced: "We are in a situation *here* and we have to deal with it *now*, not after five years' research."

Ten months on, and crime fell by 26 per cent — or 650 fewer victims each month, as Mr Mallon put it. When Dan Crompton, an Inspector of Constabulary, examined the force earlier this year, he reported: "Cleveland does not just talk about issues, it is developing an organisation which goes out and makes things happen."

But Home Office officials privately wondered why Cleveland only had one Ray Mallon. Were there no other good officers? Cynics pointed out that both New York and Cleveland had been so bad, they could only get better.

The HMI report also showed that civil claims against the force had risen from 27 in 1990 to 162 in 1996.

Neighbouring forces made it clear they would have nothing to do with zero tolerance. Frank Taylor, Chief Constable of Durham, pointed out he had a better crime-fighting record than Cleveland. So did Northumbria.

In September, Mr Mallon, newly created superintendent, spoke in a debate at the Police Superintendents' Conference. It was a bravura performance which would not have been out of place in an evangelical meeting. Although zero tolerance had much support, he was defeated by 198 to two. One delegate said: "The vote was more to do with his personality than his case."

Back in Hartlepool, Mr Mallon's successor is dedicated to continuing zero tolerance, and Cleveland is keen to emphasise that the investigations have nothing to do with the policy.

This week Jack Straw launched his Crime and Disorder Bill, unrepentant about zero tolerance but uncommunicative about Mr Mallon and his problems. In New York, Bratton now works for private industry after being sacked.

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Rector strikes it rich in Armagh's bandit country

CRISPIN RODWELL

Building bridges: Mr Kingston crosses the newly built footbridge at Creggan church. Grants have helped him to convert 13 acres into a park

Ulster is awash with ecus, dollars and pounds looking for good causes, says **Martin Fletcher**

IN THE heart of the bandit country of South Armagh, where the IRA controls the low ground and the Army huddles in hilltop watchtowers, stands one of the most lavishly funded Anglican churches in the United Kingdom.

Here in the engine-room of militant republicanism, where 97 per cent of the population is Roman Catholic, just nine Protestants and their children still attend Creggan church near Crossmaglen, but it attracts so much international largesse that its rector, Mervyn Kingston, jokes about being a "proxy millionaire".

Among other things, he has converted 13 acres of the church's land into a park, put weirs into the adjacent river to improve the angling, and is planning to build ten self-catering holiday cottages and a caravan site. In five years he has secured £600,000 for his projects and will shortly apply for another £500,000.

The 50-year-old Church of Ireland clergyman has yet to have an application for money refused. Had he been a Home Counties vicar, he would be organising endless fêtes and sponsored bike rides to keep the tower from toppling over.

The Province is awash with ecus, dollars and pounds looking for good causes. Quite apart from receiving £3.4 billion more from the Exchequer than it pays in taxes each year and £150 million a year of EU structural funds, Northern Ireland has been allocated nearly £200 million since 1995 from the EU's Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation.

The International Fund for Ireland — financed by the US, EU, Canada, New Zealand and Australia — provides about £30 million a year for social and economic regeneration programmes in the north and Irish border counties. The Millennium Commission has awarded Northern Ireland far more lottery proceeds per capita — £53 — than any other UK region. Yet the Province has the same population — 1.6 million — as Hampshire.

Half the 14,000 applications for financial assistance submitted to the EU programme have been granted. It is sometimes said, not entirely in jest, that Northern Ireland's politicians cannot afford to make peace.

Mr Kingston is refreshingly candid. "I take the view that if it's there you should use it," he says. The key, he adds, is being a minority community in what most outsiders would consider entirely the wrong place. Some 200 soldiers and policemen have been killed in South Armagh during the Troubles and all but the bravest or most stubborn Protestants have long since departed. Even today, army helicopters clatter across the sky in pairs to supply the hilltop forts, and IRA signs hang from telegraph poles.

When Mr Kingston arrived from the Shankill Road in Belfast, the Creggan church was run down but it did have an historic graveyard where three 18th-century Gaelic poets — Art McCooey, Patrick Mac Aliondain and Seamus Mor Mac Murphy — were buried. He began applying for grants, portraying the church as part of a "shared heritage" and a "potential focus for the promotion of cultural diversity and reconciliation". The money rolled in — £9,000 to restore the vault, £35,000 for the church and its organ and £27,000 to turn the old coach-house and stables into a splendid visitors' centre.

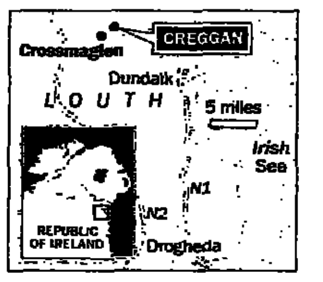
Mr Kingston recently secured a further £504,000 to reclaim the old rectory's Victorian walled garden and commission sculptures of the three poets. The flood of money has not reversed what the rector himself calls the "terminal decline" of his congregation. Nor is its relevance to the church's spiritual life immediately apparent. But it is fostering reconciliation.

To meet funding conditions, Mr Kingston's parishioners dropped objections to Catholics on their management committee. Catholics increasingly use the hall for social events. The projects have bought in jobs and tourists.

And when a local republican approached him for advice on a grant application, Mr Kingston complained about a tricolor flying from a pole outside his church. Within days it had been replaced by an EU flag.

Creggan church has secured £600,000 in funds since Mr Kingston took over in 1990

A TALE OF TWO COUNTIES



Population: Northern Ireland 1.6m; Hampshire 1.6m.

Unemployment: Nothern Ireland 7.8%; Hampshire 3.3%.

Average weekly earnings (1996): Northern Ireland £306.20; Hampshire £349.50.

Average EU funding per annum (est): Northern Ireland £215m; Hampshire £2m.

Millennium Commission grants: Northern Ireland £71.4m; Hampshire £43.7m.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Life for male prostitute turned killer

A male prostitute was sentenced to life at Bristol Crown Court yesterday for murdering a client's mother. Martin Dunnett, 32, of Crewkerne, Somerset, beat Gladys Parker senseless after she caught him searching her bungalow at Chard for cash. She was found by her son David, 46, who had been paying Dunnett for sexual favours.

Mrs Parker died in hospital seven weeks later. Dunnett was arrested but it was not until two years later, when his girlfriend told police what she knew about the crime, that he was charged.

In the mire

A farmer was charged with causing criminal damage after muck was sprayed on a branch of the NatWest bank in Ponteland, Northumberland. David Cannon, 68, of Morpeth, will appear before magistrates on January 8.

Made a meal of it

A teenage angler has broken the British record catch for the rare golden mullet despite the fact that his parents ate the evidence. David Tozer, 18, from Torquay, Devon, caught the 3lb 9oz fish off Torquay harbour.

Barman quizzed

An Australian wanted in connection with the murder of Carol Fyfe, 36, landlady of the Prince Arthur pub, Central London, was extradited from the United States. Police were questioning Gregory Mills, 27, a former barman.

Laser pen plea

A call for urgent research into the effects of laser pens was made by the Police Superintendents' Association. It said that more than half the forces had reports of pens being used temporarily to blind or distract people.

Brahms record

The working manuscript for two clarinet sonatas composed by Brahms in 1895, two years before his death, has fetched £441,500 — a world record auction price for a manuscript by the composer — at Sotheby's in London.

Lost for words

Barnsley magistrates had to postpone an assault case because handwritten police evidence was illegible. Irvin Goldsby-West, chairman of the bench, said: "We get some unusual excuses for not going ahead but this is a classic."

One cool cat

A cat was rescued by firemen after it became frozen to a roof overnight in Wiltshire. Sergeant Dave Melvin, of Chippenham police, said: "The poor cat was distressed by the ordeal but was well enough to run off."

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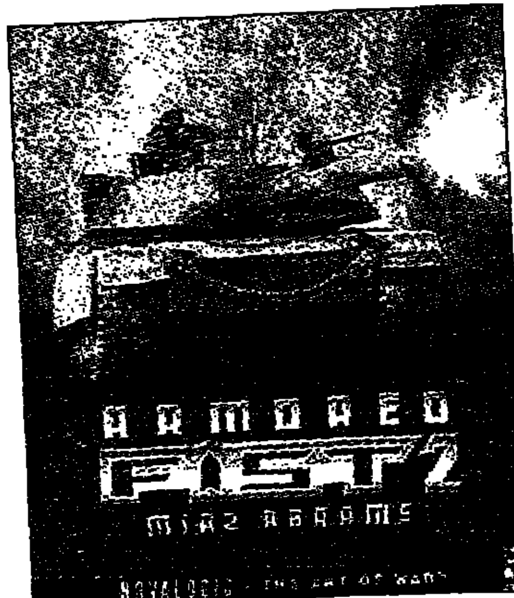

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Feminist tells women, cuddle up together

A furtive glance at the bookshelves suggests feminists, like old soldiers, never die. *Successful Without A Penis*, suggests one useful title on the German bestseller lists. *Let's Kill Barbie* is another offering.

The thrust of this literature has barely changed over the past 20 years: it takes the assumptions of the feminist canon and turns them into instruction manuals for mainly young women who feel excluded from a male-dominated institution.

Fortunately, Shere Hite, chronicler of the female orgasm in the 1970s, did not die, nor did she fade away: she did, however, move to Germany and become a German citizen. The author of the Hite reports on female and male sexuality is now 55 and has produced a book on female behaviour which is set to be as controversial as its predecessors.

How Women See Women (so far only available in German, Europa Verlag, Munich) asks questions about loyalty between women. "In 25 years," she says, "we have changed our relationships with men and have changed ourselves, but we have not changed sufficiently the ways women deal with other women."

Hite is reluctant to discuss her own female friendships across Europe — she lives in Cologne and Paris — for fear of trivialisation. "You wouldn't ask Samuel Huntington whether he has clashed with any civilisations lately, would you?" It has to be assumed that the many women quoted about their often nervous, over-hesitant friendships are not trawled from her two decades as one of the world's leading sexologists rather than from personal experience.

Her arguments are intuitive rather than empirically based, but no less interesting for that. Sigmund Freud and Bruno Bettelheim also built theories on the basis of observation, anecdotal material and deep thought, says Hite, and what is good for the founding fathers of psychoanalysis is good for her.

"Loyalty between women," she says, "is a bigger taboo than lesbianism. There is a pressing need for a middle status between the kind of best friend that is dumped as soon as a man appears on the horizon and the sexual intensity of lesbianism. Women can learn solidarity and intimacy and can shed the idea that they are competitors. Physical closeness — cuddling in front of the television, bathing together, setting up house together, bringing up a child — should all be possible, especially in a world where divorced, unmarried or widowed women make up the majority of a city's population.

"Women can and should be mentors of younger women. And if two women directors are on a male-dominated company board, they should coordinate their voting to the benefit of other women. We have the power of numbers — women make up more than one half of the world's population — so we should be asking ourselves: can't we make better alliances together?"

Feminist writers have always described and called for a sisterhood, a common area of feminine activity. Yet, says Hite, the practical dynamics of this sisterhood have not really been debated, nor have the origins of female rivalry.

"When a woman walks into a room at a business meeting or a party, another woman watching her may automatically think to herself, 'Is she prettier than me? Younger, better dressed?'. What if a woman thinks instead: *Here comes a woman. Will she be a good addition to my life? How would I like to relate to her?*"

The problem of female rivalry, the stumbling block to full emancipation, starts in early girlhood. Mothers hide their sexuality from their daughters as part of the maternal mystique. "Girls feel at a very early age that touching another woman in any kind of way that relates to sexual parts of the body is forbidden." The relationship with men is generally far more open. "Even when a man and a woman are not sexual together, there is comfort in knowing that the body is accepted as part of overall identity," says Hite. "But between women, though women's friendships are often excellent, the early sexual taboo causes psychological hesitation and confusion." These attitudes shape relations between women in the workplace. Women, it seems, have to transcend this taboo if they are to realise their potential.

NEW RULES

Shere Hite on how women should treat women:

☐ Once you've made a date with a girlfriend, stick to it and do not call it off because a man has rung.
☐ Compliment your friend.
☐ Ring her regularly.
☐ A friendship needs at least one deep conversation every three weeks or so.
☐ Do not forget to plan to do things together in the future.
☐ Always listen to your girlfriend.
☐ Don't talk solely about your man or child.
☐ Never tell your friends that you are too busy to talk.
☐ Do not drop her like a hot potato as soon as you fall in love or have a baby.

Hite gives a checklist of how women should start treating their women friends (see above). To a man, this advice sounds rather banal. But Shere Hite's appeal — certainly her skill at making the bestseller lists — is to link practical lifestyle guidance with philosophical musings. It really does seem as if women need to be reminded to treat their women friends as equals with their male lovers. And her questions do niggle: "Why do men create male loyalty systems that work (political parties, sports teams) whereas women do not?"

Hite is in fact very good at posing questions. She seems to tread across a borderland between popular culture and the intellectually diverting, and although her conclusions are a little anaemic, the questions asked en route are always interesting. Her technique, but also her personality, sets her apart from the likes of Andrea Dworkin and Kate Millett. She is not a dungarees feminist. To finance her doctoral studies at Columbia University, she signed up as a model. Some nude pictures taken then appeared later (to her intense embarrassment) in *Playboy*. The decisive advertisement in her modelling career was for Olivetti. She appeared as a secretary next to a typewriter which was described in the copy as being "So smart she doesn't have to be". The crudity of the text helped to propel her towards the National Organisation of Women, which picketed Olivetti's Manhattan office. A feminist was born. But her looks — she is still a pale beauty — remained part of her career, earning her big television promotion and some resentment from other feminists.

ELI REED/MAGNUM

Historical solidarity: Shere Hite visits a statue of the 19th-century French woman author, George Sand

The Hite reports were criticised for their methodology. She sent out 100,000 questionnaires to women's organisations, and thus drew a rather self-selecting response; angry comments from angry women. Hite replied to her critics with some justification: to be scientific is not the same as to be representative. Prominent sexologists praised her work, and her findings — about the difficulty of women reaching orgasm, about male and female infidelity — touched a raw nerve in the 1970s and 1980s. They were a snapshot of the times.

Shere Hite with concert pianist Friedrich Häricke

The mood turned ugly in America, however, after the publication in 1987 of the third Hite report, *Women And Love*. "I wound up leaving the country ... the sort of things that happened around that time ranged from gross harassment by national television networks, physical intimidation and disruption at my lectures, hostile taunts and threats left on my answering machine." She blamed the "reactionary Reagan-Bush climate" which pitted fundamentalist Christians against writers who dealt with sexually explicit subjects.

Partly because of the backlash, but also because she fell in love with the German concert pianist Friedrich Häricke, she moved to Cologne. The cultural atmosphere in Europe, she says, is better and she is in constant contact with women's groups there. It seems an odd kind of life, giving a new layer of meaning to the term "professional woman"; womanhood has become her calling.

ROGER BOYES

GIRL POWER

Model friendship: Marie Helvin and Jerry Hall

Supportive: Kate Moss and Naomi Campbell

By Erica Wagner

Girl power has been much in the news since the advent of the Spice Girls, and now Shere Hite has climbed on the bandwagon. Women need passionate friendships, she says: feminism has only taken us so far because we cannot overcome the rivalries that exist among ourselves.

But literature, history and popular culture are littered with examples of women who have stuck together. Sometimes the "passionate" nature of these friendships has led to explosive endings, but that is often the case when passion, whether sexual or amicable, is in the mix.

Madonna was thick as thieves with comedian Sandra Bernhard for a while: that friendship, some say, helped to break up the pop icon's marriage to Sean Penn (which was probably not what Hite had in mind). But Linda Robson and Pauline Quirke, those birds of a feather, are still great chums, always on television together and (until recently) living near each other in north London.

The supermodel friendship has an ancient lineage (or as ancient as supermodels may admit to being): Jerry Hall and Marie Helvin spring to mind; they met while modelling in the 1970s. Naomi Campbell, Kate Moss, Christy Turlington and Co continue the tradition of sharing each other's Marlboros and being supportive after those long days in front of the camera.

Just the other week we witnessed Victoria Spencer and Chantal Collopy — presumably rivals — united in the face of Earl Spencer's not-quite-gentlemanly behaviour. Author Lisa Jardine, Professor of Renaissance Studies at Queen Mary and Westfield College, wrote last week in *The Guardian* of the importance to her of her "girl gang". She believes firmly that women can and will support each other: there is only a perception that they won't.

"I think the difficulty for women in the workplace is the way that antagonism to each other seems to be structured in: women are perceived as being sex competitors, and men simply are not. That's not only unfair, it impedes what's really necessary — that women should join together. Male friendships are invisible because they are everywhere.

She says: "Female friendship is more visible, because there are still fewer women in positions of power, and that is a problem, but it won't be for long."

Author and commentator Sarah Dunant — whose closest friendship, with a woman who now lives in America, has lasted more than 20 years and is, she feels, marked by a degree of honesty that could never exist between lovers — does not believe, as Hite does, that rivalry too often mars women's friendships: but she does believe in preserving friendships outside romance.

"Marriage, or a relationship, is sometimes seen to provide everything — your partner should be your lover, your best friend, your confidante — but no one can supply all that. Female friendship reaches parts that men can't reach."

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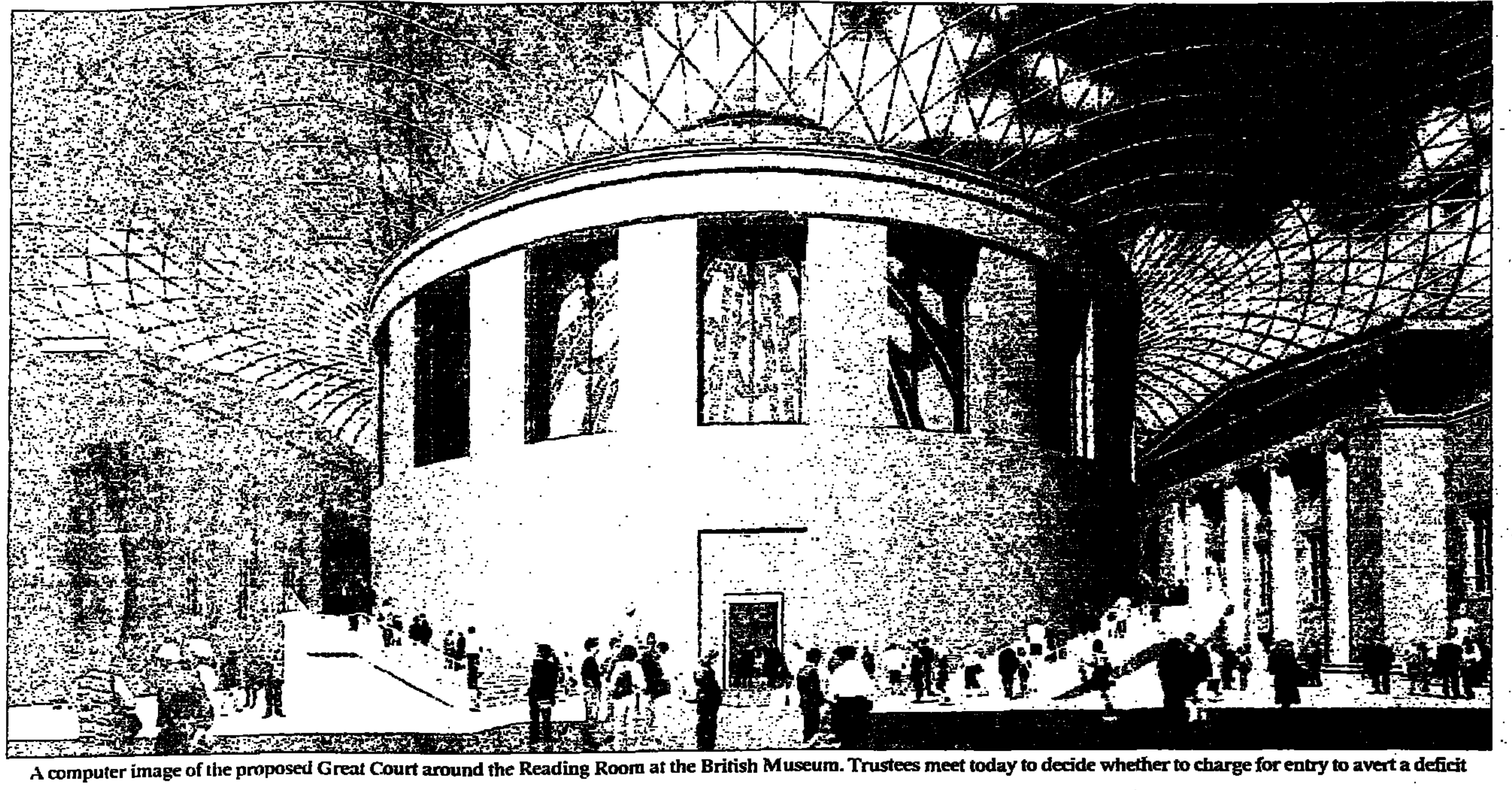


PA

A computer image of the proposed Great Court around the Reading Room at the British Museum. Trustees meet today to decide whether to charge for entry to avert a deficit

On the ropes: the RSC and *The Spanish Tragedy*

Arts paint picture of culture in crisis

***The art world is infamous for declaring itself ignored and underfunded, but it may be justified, writes* Richard Morrison**

IF gloomy headlines could kill, the arts world would be buried by now. In the past few weeks the Royal Opera House has been revealed to be in chaos. The Royal Shakespeare Company has announced a deficit of £1.6 million. The Chichester Festival has parted from its director after a £600,000 loss on the season.

The Old Vic is being sold after running up a £2 million loss on Sir Peter Hall's repertory theatre season. English National Opera's future is clouded in uncertainty, after the resignation of its general director and the suggestion of Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, that it be shunted into Covent Garden. Several famous British orchestras have nearly empty order books and some pioneering London theatres are screaming blue murder after having their grants slashed.

These are only the most prominent casualties. As our report, right, shows, the financial turmoil is spread through every region and every art form. To cap it all, the British Museum trustees meet today to decide whether to impose admission charges in order to avert a large deficit. If that bastion of free entry falls, museum insiders say, every other free museum throughout the land will follow suit.

No wonder that the Prince of Wales observed a fortnight ago that the arts were becoming "of secondary or even tertiary importance" in British society. The arts world is infamous for declaring itself in crisis. This time it is hard not to feel that Matilda may actually be burning.

The dominant feeling in arts circles at present, however, is not panic. It is anger. Arts organisations feel betrayed. At the general election the "luvvie vote" was emphatically with Labour. The arts world, which had seen public subsidy plunge in real terms under John Major, expected Labour to pump-prime a renaissance. Encouraging speeches from Tony Blair about the importance of culture to his vision of Britain did nothing to dampen such hopes.

But Labour's manifesto carefully made no financial pledges to the arts world, and now the reality of that vagueness is sinking in. As the Kurt Weill song says: "It's a long, long time from May to December". In the past week there have been bitter accusations that Labour is much more interested in jumping on the bandwagon of "sexy" culture — film, design, pop music — than in preserving the traditional glories of theatre, concert hall and art gallery. Even the change of name on the minister's front door — from Heritage to Culture — seems to symbolise Labour's lack of concern with the "grown-up" arts.

It is not just falling subsidy that has caused the present crisis. Box-office income this year, particularly for theatre, has been hit by two factors outside the control of their administrators: the strong pound, which has deterred tourists, and the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, which apparently wiped out theatregoing for the best part of a fortnight.

Then there is the National Lottery. Once hailed as the arts' saviour, it has proved a mixed blessing. Confined by regulations mostly to funding "capital projects", it is useless for dealing with revenue deficits. Yet it bankrolls vast building schemes which then soak up disproportionately large amounts of fundraising effort and managerial time. One reason for Covent Garden's seemingly inept management during 1995 and 1996 may be that its executives were so busy worrying about the Royal Opera House's redevelopment that they took their eyes off the day-to-day running of the House.

It does not help that the Arts Council is currently in impotent inertia: no secretary-general since May, and no new chairman yet appointed to succeed Earl Gowrie. Such is its present lowly status that it has been humiliatingly sidelined during the present opera dispute by the Culture Secretary's direct interventions. That in turn has called into question the entire "arm's length principle" by which the arts are funded. Another destabilising factor.

Other sources of funding are also faltering. Corporate arts sponsorship, the hope of the 1980s, is proving increasingly elusive. The Midland Bank's hardnosed withdrawal from supporting Prom performances at Covent Garden after 25 years, in favour of supporting a rock festival, reveals the extent of the image problem for arts fundraisers.

Local authorities, with shining exceptions, have shrunk their arts budgets to negligible levels. That has torpedoed many regional rep theatres. The arts have been marginalised in classrooms, as schools are pressurised into concentrating on "academic" subjects. That has made it difficult for arts organisations to build links with young audiences. And serious culture is virtually excluded from mainstream television, the greatest popularising medium of our age, as the networks obsessively chase ratings.

It is a grim picture, and there is not much consolation in the fact that matters are no better abroad. In America the National Endowment for the Arts has just issued a huge, pessimistic document revealing that annual donations to American arts bodies have fallen by a disastrous £150 million in three years, and accusing the arts world of being "elitist, racist and irrelevant".

In Russia and Eastern Europe many formerly world-class ensembles have been blown away by the cold gale of market forces. Even in France, Italy and Germany, organisations once plushly cushioned by subsidy are now desperately seeking private and corporate saviours.

Hope in Britain now resides in Labour's revisions of the lottery regulations. If lottery money can be released for general-purpose arts spending, the climate will be transformed. But even here danger lurks. Lottery money could insidiously be used to replace (rather than supplement) Treasury funding of the arts .. and then the lottery might dry up. It is the doomsday scenario that the arts world does not dare to think about.

THE STATE THEY ARE IN

Juggling grants, loans and box-office receipts in an ever more desperate attempt to keep the deficit within manageable proportions has become a way of life for many in the arts world. Dalya Alberge examines the state of companies around the country

ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

☐ Relies on sponsorship; no public funding or government subsidy. The RA is applying to the National Lottery for funds for a feasibility study on redoing the Museum of Mankind. Has staged some excellent exhibitions but has not been as successful as it would have liked in attracting a younger generation — it tried to address that with the controversial show *Sensation*, which included the Myra Hindley portrait. Sponsorship has been tough to find and the RA has been forced to turn to a third division football club, Peterborough, for its next show.

LIVERPOOL PLAYHOUSE

☐ In administration. The funding situation could not be more desperate. The theatre is due to close on January 3 unless a benefactor can be found. Inland Revenue moved in because of debt and on October 6 Ernst & Young were appointed administrators. Has a long tradition of launching famous playwrights, including Alan Bleasdale. Many believe the theatre has been unfairly neglected but local authorities — notably Liverpool — are particularly strapped for cash. The loss will be widely lamented.

ROYAL COURT THEATRE

☐ £1 million from taxpayer, £16.2 million from lottery but needs to raise £6 million by 1999. Massive rebuilding project on target. Maintains reputation for artistic excellence and image for controversial stagings, most recently a play about teenage gang rape. Attacked in 1995 for explicit sex and violence in *Blasted*.

SCOTTISH OPERA

☐ £6.54 million from taxpayer, £3.6 million from lottery but Government insists on savings. Does not forecast a deficit and is looking at administrative collaboration with other companies. Stages good standard productions but observers are waiting to see what Ruth Mackenzie, the new director, can achieve.

Hallé

☐ £1.25 million from taxpayer, £379,000 from lottery. Standstill funding from the Arts Council means cut in real terms. Local authority funding far from adequate but City of Manchester very supportive. Finances desperate but no more so than most orchestras. Maintaining artistic standards in performances around the country. One critic wrote recently: "If I try to describe why last night's concert was so exciting and rewarding, I shall soon run out of superlatives."

TateGallery

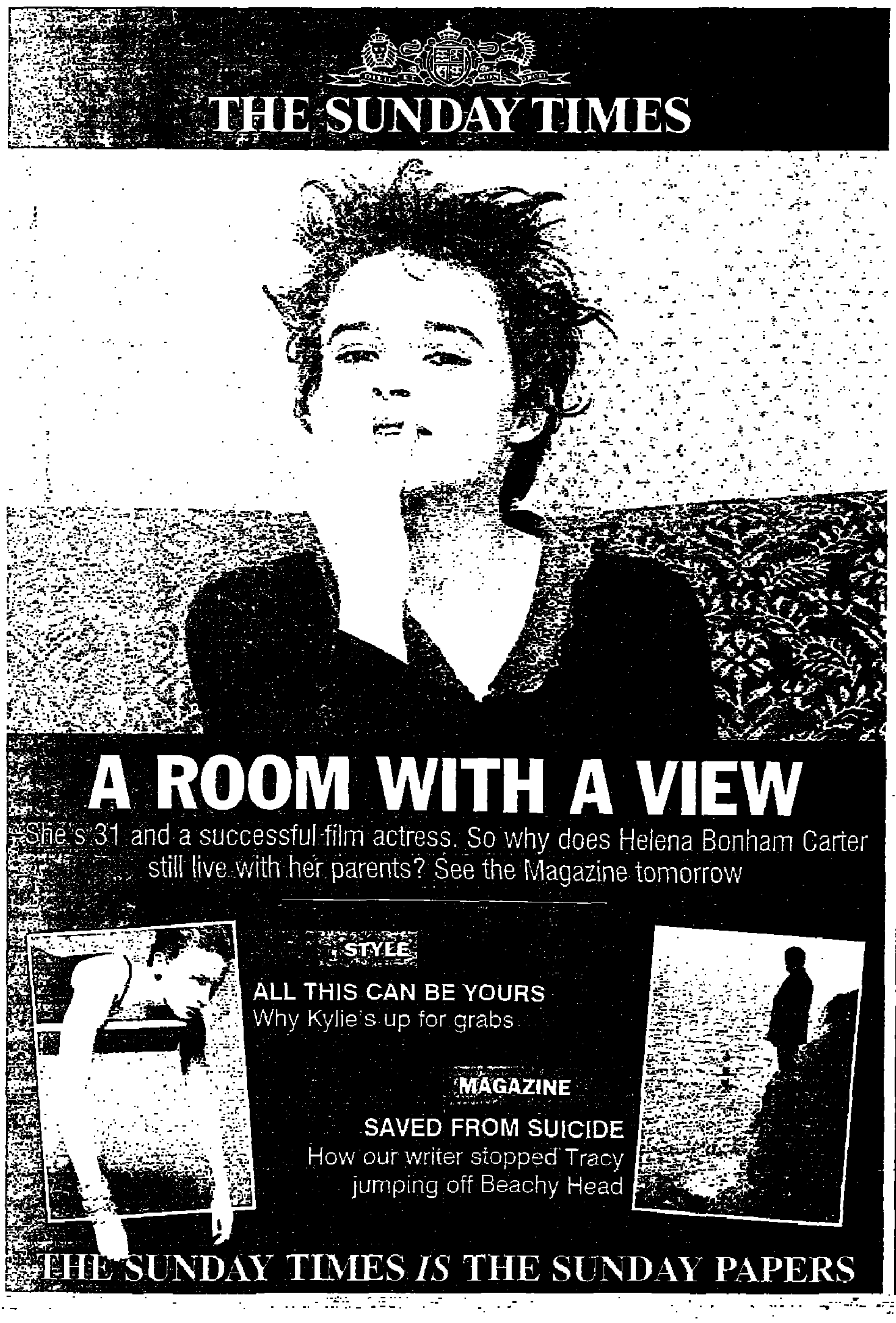
☐ £18.66 million from taxpayer, lottery grants of £18.75 million and £50 million for Millbank and Bankside projects; needs to raise £27 million. On verge of charging to meet £1 million debt. Raising money from sponsorship, publishing, retailing. Staffing is biggest cost. Probably room for further expansion of commercial ventures to ensure free access to core collections. Good exhibitions.

THE Royal Exchange THEATRE COMPANY AT UPPER CAMPFIELD MARKET

☐ £1.3 million from taxpayer, £23 million from lottery for new theatre after IRA bomb. Needs to raise £500,000. Before bomb, was enjoying a successful phase, wiping out a deficit. Hopes to open in a year and double output. Excellent productions. Keeping up morale and performing in a mobile theatre until new building opens. Loyal audiences.

RSC Royal Shakespeare Company

☐ £8.8 million from taxpayer; has submitted lottery bid for feasibility study into £75 million redevelopment of Stratford headquarters. Facing deficit of £1.6 million, wants help from Government. When it cut London season by half, grant from Corporation of London slashed by more than £1 million. Difficulties exacerbated by freeze on grant for four years. Announcement due on December 10. Money from *Les Misérables* has been tailing off. Generally very high quality productions, but audiences can sense cost-cutting: cast sizes, for example, have gone down.



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VALERIE GROVE MEETS: GERALD KAUFMAN

'You should never take things personally, it's just part of the game'

CHRIS HARRIS

The seventh child of an immigrant tailor, Kaufman is said to be vain, waspish, good company and invincibly self-confident

"Take off your coat and hat," says Gerald Kaufman, "and leave your worries on the doorstep." He wears an insouciant air for one who has just put a bomb under the Royal Opera House with his lacerating report.

He had been in a meeting discussing the Millennium Dome when news came of the Opera House board's mass resignation. Kaufman professed himself "surprised". "It's very peculiar," he said innocently, as if the resultant chaos is nothing to do with him.

"There's got to be a board, because the board appoints the board. It is what has been described as 'a self-perpetuating oligarchy'. If the board dissolves itself as an entity, then the Secretary of State takes over." So Chris Smith is left in the mire. "He's the Secretary of State," cries Kaufman. "He's got all these well-informed advisers." I said Mary Allen — whose behaviour over her appointment as chief executive "fell seriously below the standard expected of the principal officer of a public body" — had sounded pretty impressive on Radio 4's *Today* programme. "I am not going to make any personal comment about Mary Allen or anyone else. Before she gave evidence, I had met her on a handful of occasions and she seemed to me an agreeable person. I have no animus against her or indeed anyone else."

I was surprised to learn that Kaufman, who at 67 has been in the public swim for so long, had never met the board until now. "I am not part of the social circle of the opera house," he said. He had never set eyes on Lord Chadlington, who has now resigned as chairman, or Robert Gavron, a board member, until they gave evidence before the select committee. He had met Vivien Duffield, another board member, once before. "She works very hard and she's very generous, isn't she?" he said — an understatement, since Mrs Duffield has poured millions of her personal fortune into Covent Garden — "and she seems to know a lot of other people who are generous. That is a very important capability." Quite.

Mrs Duffield and Mr Gavron were exonerated from blame in Kaufman's report — but the milch-cow baby has now been thrown out with the bathwater.

Could he specify which "philistine with financial acumen" he would suggest to run the opera house instead of the "succession of opera and ballet lovers who have brought a great institution to its knees"? "It would be unfair," he laughed, "to single out one. Unfair on all the other philistines." It turns out that he did know one of his victims well. "Jeremy Isaacs and I were at Oxford together, in the Labour Club, and he even says I introduced him to certain sorts of music." Yet he had questioned Sir Jeremy's competence. Had they spoken since? "No. One compartmentalises life. Just because somebody was a friend, or was someone for whom I have a great personal regard, I don't think I should refrain from saying what I believe ought to be said. Isn't that a sanctimonious thing to say? But that's how I approached it. I thought long and hard about the passages relating to Jeremy."

The report was, of course, the collaborative, unanimous work of his 11-strong committee — "we proceeded in collegiate fashion" — but its trenchant soundbites have the hallmark of the tabloid-trained hack. Kaufman, who started on the *Daily Mirror* in 1955 at £750 a year, wrote speeches for Harold Wilson, and sketches for *That Was The Week That Was* — notably the item about "the silent men of Westminster", MPs who had not uttered a word in the House for years — and uttered the *aperçu* that the 1992 Labour manifesto was "the longest suicide note in history".

Kaufman is a singular cove. I recall his giving the annual press awards one year and delivering an ill-judged joke, unprintable here — a definition of "queers". He is said to be vain, waspish, good company and — like many single men who were their mothers' darlings — invincibly self-confident. He was the seventh child of an immigrant tailor in Leeds: "I cannot recommend a better place in the family," he says. He was cosseted by five sisters who bought him comics and took him places.

Three of the sisters and his elder brother went to work in tailoring factories; two sisters became teachers. All stayed in Leeds, apart from little Gerald. He must have been swottish at school to get his exhibition in classics to Oxford: "But I had lots of friends. In fact the other day I went with an old friend from Leeds Grammar School to see Sophocles' *Electra* at the Donmar Warehouse."

Recently he wrote a fine, moving essay about his mother, who could not read English, only Yiddish. (Kaufman regards himself as a "negligent but practising Jew".) Mother was self-sacrificial, forever at the stove but also a cinema-going companion to her son. He claims there were 55 cinemas in Leeds in the 1930s.

When I express incredulity, he says Keith Waterhouse claims there were more. He became a cineaste. "Going to the pictures" is a hobby in *Who's Who*, and *LA Confidential* is the best new film he has seen in ages; but untrammelled by family commitments, he goes to theatre and opera too. "I am neither highbrow nor lowbrow. I will go to anything, listen to anything and watch anything that appeals." He had seen the National Theatre's *Cyrano de Bergerac* at Blackpool; had booked for *Tosca* at the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, *Othello* at the Nationa, and the Sondheim musical *Saturday Night* at the Bridewell Theatre later this month.

He first came to London to a bedsitter in Stamford Hill, as bleak as it sounds, to be general secretary of the Fabian Society. In those days he sat in the gods but even now that he can afford the stalls, his feelings about Covent Garden are "ambivalent". In this week's *Spectator* he refers to its "stifling aura of social exclusivity". "Every time I set foot there I was overwhelmed by the feeling that I was not wanted as a member."

Perhaps this is the key to Kaufman's hounding of the ROH board. He thinks opera-goers are snobs, but not opera buffs. He is graphically scathing about the grandees who manage to get served in the Crush Bar ("I never could"), or sit at little tables ingesting smoked salmon, or fan themselves with their "bulkily expensive" programmes, or open their *Marriage of Figaro* programme and exclaim "Oh! It's by Mozart!" In his office, the screen behind him announces that Mr M. Howard is now speaking in the European debate. "Ah, the SHADOW Foreign Secretary," said Kaufman with relish. "It's nice saying that. I love being able to use the phrase, 'the previous Government'. People are really happy that we've got rid of them."

> ❛ He is scathing about the opera grandees who sit at little tables ingesting smoked salmon ❜

I began to list the things people are far from happy about this week — killing Peps and Tessas, stupid beef ban, etc — when he interrupted: "This Government will do many extremely unpopular things before it faces the electorate again: that is in the nature of being in government. I don't have to be madly keen on every single thing it does. On the other hand, I support this Government; I've not waited 18 years for a Labour government just to start griping.

"Sometimes I will voice my reservations, but only privately. I am a sycophant but not a mindless sycophant."

Before going off to his Manchester constituency for the weekend (eg, to draw the raffle at the Gorton Labour Club tomorrow), he was going home to his flat near Regent's Park to finish a Patricia Cornwell novel: "I detest her books but I review crime fiction for *The Scotsman*."

A ubiquitous reviewer, he admires authors who remain civil despite his adverse notices. "There's a woman called Janet Cohen, a BBC governor, whose books I think are terrible, and she's lovely about it. I was very hostile to Noel Annan's *Our Age* but when we met at a dinner, he couldn't have been nicer. It taught me a lesson" — and perhaps there is a message here for the vilified and embattled opera board members — "you should never take things personally, it's just part of the game."

Cuts that forget the play's the thing

Hamlet

The Barbican

Everyone knows the old joke about the folly of playing Hamlet without the Prince. But at the Barbican it sometimes seems the Prince without *Hamlet*. Alex Jennings is impressive in the title role. The problem is what the often exciting, sometimes foolhardy young director Matthew Warchus has done with the play.

The first scene, ghost and all, is missing. All we see is Jennings's Hamlet pouring the ashes of his dead father on to the ground in front of film of his happy childhood. Then we cut to a party where Paul Freeman's dinner-jacketed Claudius smooches with Susannah York's svelte, smiling Gertrude and, later, Edward Petherbridge's Ghost appears amid the fun to lead his son to a seat sprouting from the brutalist concrete of Mark Thompson's Elsinore.

Where there should be armour and a beaver, there is a velvet jacket and a bow-tie, and where there should be horror, grief and rage there is gentlemanly fastidiousness. Unsurprisingly, there is no metaphysical or, for that matter, political dimension to this Hamlet.

Warchus's cuts see off "something is rotten in the state of Denmark" and many a great line. He also opts for dubious transpositions and spurious additions. The effect is to turn a poetic tragedy into a naturalistic family drama that, believe it or not, ends with sentimental film footage of the boy prince cavorting in the snow with his pa: Hamlet filtered through *Hello!* magazine.

Let me admit I liked it more, or disliked it less, than when I saw it at Stratford in May. The production has a brisk, cinematic flow and there are some striking stage pictures. There are also some decent performances, notably Freeman's Claudius and Derbhle Crotty's Ophelia. But Warchus's reductionism does not help David Ryall, whose Polonius lacks bite, or Jennings himself.

That is a huge pity, for his Hamlet combines grace, intelligence and emotional volatility. To see him steer his way from excitement at the arrival of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to cold mistrust when he twigs their motives is to watch a skilful actor near the height of his powers. But why must he hold a gun to his head in the "to be" speech? Why can't he deliver the monologue that starts "how all occasions do inform against me"? Why is he in this production?

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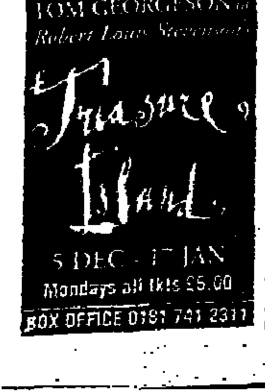

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Museums, money and modernity

The British Museum can learn from the V & A, says **Alan Borg**

The trustees of the British Museum meet today to decide whether they must introduce admission charges. No one concerned with museums will envy them in this task, not least because their decision surely has to provide the foundations for a sustainable long-term future for the institution.

It is widely rumoured that the Government has found additional funds to bail out the British Museum for next year while the other great national museums will face yet another round of swingeing cuts to their grants. If we set aside the question of whether this is a sensible or equitable use of public money, the key issue remains the long-term future of all our national collections.

The very fact that the British Museum, with six million visitors a year, finds itself forced to consider a course which it has so vigorously decried is vivid evidence of just how parlous the state of museum funding now is. If museums and galleries are important, indeed vital, to our national soul, then it is equally vital that they are able to establish for themselves a future that is much more than keeping the wolf from the door or slow genteel decay.

Eighteen months ago, in a different political climate, the Victoria and Albert Museum was faced with financial circumstances that were perhaps worse than those confronting the British Museum today. The trustees' eventual decision to introduce admission charges was made only after deep heart-searching. But charging was a less unpalatable means of balancing our budget than the additional severe cuts to services and staff that would have been made necessary by reductions in government funding.

Our concern was to give the museum the best fighting chance to sustain and develop for the future those educational initiatives, community programmes, family activities and other events and services for the public from which so much of the museum's value derives. We felt that charging, with generous exemptions for children and students, together with a daily period open free to all (and some 45 per cent of our visitors still come in free), was the only way in which we could hope to achieve this.

I am not suggesting here that charges are necessarily the answer to the British Museum's dilemma — every institution must find its own solution, but the problem is common to us all. A quick fix will only mean that the problem will be back again next year and this plainly will not do.

Too much of the recent debate over museum admission charges has given the impression of being concerned with temporary papering over of funding cracks, in a Micawberish faith that something will turn up.

It is time to ask how our museums can be put on to a funding basis that allows them to plan for progress and development, because change they must.

In the past few weeks alone two major art centres have opened, the Guggenheim in Bilbao and the new Getty in America. In this country new museums have arrived and established ones have been transformed. We have a new Government emphasising the importance of design and education, in both of which museums have a crucial role to play. The audiences for museums are increasingly visually aware. For museums, I believe renewal is now not optional but an essential element in retaining our engagement with visitors.

The V&A has itself redisplayed 11 major galleries in the past ten years, and we are now finalising the designs for the complete renewal of our 15 British galleries, a project equivalent in scale to a decent-sized museum.

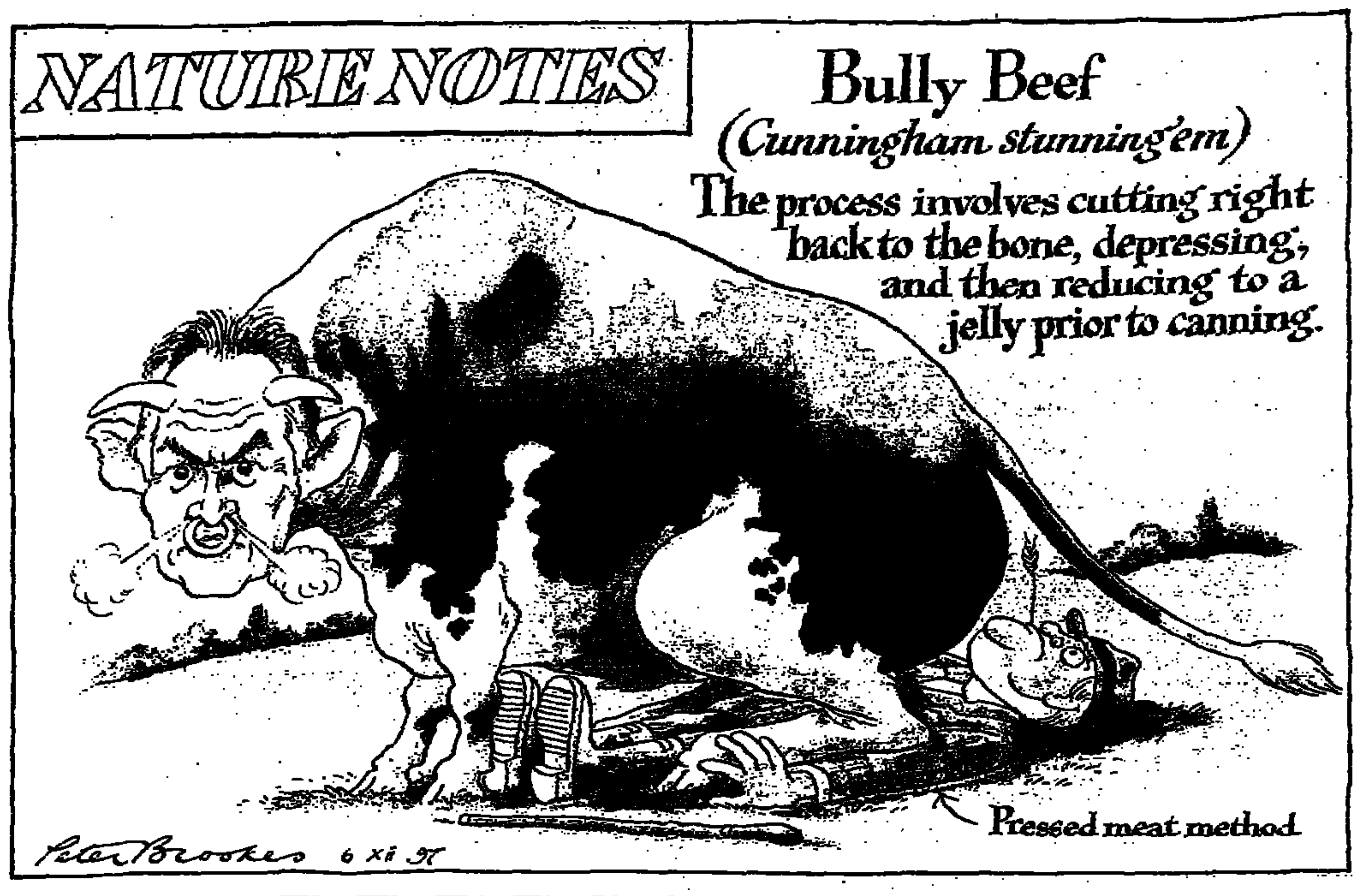
By any standards, the current 50-year-old galleries are now sad, down-at-heel and inadequate settings for the 3,000 glorious works by Adam, Chippendale and other great names of British art that they house. Their redesign was my first priority when I became Director and we now have a scheme that does them full justice.

The elegant and intelligent design proposals by Dinah Casson and David Mlinaric at last bring many marvellous works of art out from behind glass to be properly appreciated in open displays. Controlled lighting and environment will enable us to display material which previously was considered too sensitive. New technologies will provide visitors with access to a wealth of information related to the works on show.

Much of the thinking behind these redesigns is in response to research that has shown us just how little the average museum visitor now gets from the old galleries they will replace. Particularly for the younger museum visitor, familiar with information through multimedia (a week in which the Turner Prize was won by a multimedia artist signals this new visual sophistication), a very different gallery experience needs to be provided. Equally clear has been that the galleries must be completely accessible to the widest spread of visitors, and for those with disabilities.

We believe that it is essential to make such a commitment to deliver for the future and it is heartening to find so many supporters who see the V&A as investing for tomorrow. I hope that, whatever the British Museum trustees decide, the Government will now address how all museums should be funded to build the long-term renaissance that our visitors require and deserve.

The author is Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum.


NATURE NOTES
Bully Beef
(Cunningham stunning'em)
The process involves cutting right back to the bone, depressing, and then reducing to a jelly prior to canning.
Pressed meat method
Peter Brookes 6 xii 97

Boneless wonders

The T-bone terror proves that ministers have no grasp of science or maths — let alone our liberties

Simon Jenkins

The giant finger whooshes out of the night sky and points at the dumbstruck face in the window. "It could be you," says a voice. This week the Agriculture Minister Jack Cunningham impersonated the National Lottery advertiser. As the nation's fork was poised with a T-bone steak on its way to the nation's mouth, Dr Cunningham screamed: "Don't touch it." According to the great god science, new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (nvCJD) could be lurking in that mouthful. There is a small risk, and where there is risk, a government must ban.

Perhaps only mathematicians are aware of the enormity of what the Government did this week. It took a risk that is statistically negligible and exploited it as an act of insufferable nannying. Beef ribs, T-bones and oxtails present a public health risk publicised as "very small" and "a chance of one case per year" (though none of Britain's 22 nvCJD cases has been positively linked to beef). Most newspapers cluelessly converted "a chance" into a certainty, and ridiculed the risk as a tiny one in 56 million. But that is not what the scientists said. They suggested the chance was "5 per cent", so the risk is nearer to one in 1.1 billion, or one in 560 million among the half of the population that eats beef. There can have been no more tenuous basis for an infringement of personal liberty.

What happened this week is sadly familiar. When a politician sees a letter from the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC) his knees wobble, his head moves from side to side and he slides into the statistical mud. The infection is passed on from "the science" in a six-monthly viral dose that drives every minister to the political abattoir. Probability theory, risk assessment and statistical numeracy give way to the one art at which these people are supreme, banning things.

My reaction is to wonder what other innocent activity is in danger from new Labour. On the Richter scale of T-bone terror, doom must now hover over motorbikes, alcoholic drink, children's playgrounds, jogging and hot baths. The Cabinet must be at risk of negligence in not banning pastimes more injurious to the nation's health than beef. How can it permit men to ski downhill, go to Egypt, sleep with prostitutes or eat butter? How can it let women take the Pill or drive cars alone?

This Government is plainly eager to outdo the last in the banning stakes. Foxhunting and low wages are for the chop, but the past week alone has seen the long arms of the law close round in-bone beef, tobacco advertising, children out after dark, "antisocial" neighbours and front doorsteps. When I read about the last, I assumed it was a joke. But no. Enviroment Secretary John Prescott's new building control manual does not lie. The British doorstep joins the unventilated lavatory as a forbidden hazard to the nation's health.

There can be no end to this madness. If he bans doorsteps, Mr Prescott must logically ban "upstairs" without lifts. Stairs are the killing fields of the family home. Hundreds die on them each year. They are drenched in blood and creaking with risk. Mr Prescott could be sued to the skies for not including them with his murderous doorsteps. New Britain is presumably to be forced into a standardised "Blair Millennium Bungalow". If floodwater pours under its stepless front door, too bad. I wonder which carpet salesman gave £1 million to Labour last year.

Democratic politics has long been the art of spreading risk. But there must be a limit. What is unsettling in the BSE-CJD saga is the susceptibility of politicians to science. It is 18 months since the scare began. In that time almost £5 billion has been squandered in payments to those who visited this minor menace on the consumer. Britons are currently paying a penny on income tax in compensation. No industry other than agriculture would have been rewarded for its collective misfortune or misbehaviour in this way: no drugs company, no car manufacturer, no engineer, no asbestos maker. Yet the Treasury has even compensated the venal renderers, to the tune of £150 million in a year. I hope the new inquiry into the BSE affair will seek the justification for this particular handout, which no minister has fully explained.

Yet over CJD I have some sympathy with the farmers. The scientists who first sounded the alarm over CJD specifically said that the "probable" link with BSE in cattle was not sufficiently strong nor sufficiently widespread to justify wholesale slaughter or a food ban. They just wanted to keep the public informed of their research, which incidentally showed that BSE was in rapid decline. It was (Conservative) ministers who panicked. They believed a costly slaughter programme — killing and burning tens of thousands of healthy cattle — would lead to other European states lifting their bans on British beef, bans that had little to do with health and everything with farm protectionism. The ministers were wrong. The miscalculation massively damaged British beef consumption. Since then, nothing has been learnt. Appeasing foreign farmers gets nowhere.

While the politicians half understood the science, they never understood the maths. Throughout the affair there has been talk of "small risk", of "probable risk", of "some link". The chairman of the SEAC, John Pattison, peers through his glasses and affirms that, in all honesty and speaking as a scientist, "there is risk". He expects us to cringe at the feet of mighty science, and give him more cash for research. Yet this is not news we can use. We know all food is ingested with some risk to our bodies. The issue is how much risk. And on that subject, all have recourse to vague adjectives and nouns.

Scientists may be good at science but they are often dreadful at English. The consequence is to leave the electric word "risk" all but unqualified, and to leave politicians all at sea. I am sure Dr Cunningham can understand the risk of crossing a road, driving with alcohol or playing rugby. He can offer the public a warning and remind it of the doctrine of *caveat emptor*. But a scientific risk qualified only by a diminutive adjective is beyond him — research chemist though he be. His response to the word risk is the word ban.

The American mathematician John Allen Paulos once proposed a logarithmic safety index, to be applied to all stories about safety and risk. His index is based on the logarithm of the ratio of the population to the particular cause of death. Paulos's index was admirable. Smoking was very risky, with a logarithmic index of 2.9. Driving a car was almost as dangerous (in America) at 3.7. The risk of child kidnap was 6.7, a safety index too high to justify a government in banning children from going outdoors.

On government figures, the risk of catching nvCJD appears to be 8.8 for beef-eaters and 9 for the nation as a whole. Eating beef must be one of the safest things a person can spend time doing, safer than switching to fish and choking on a bone. Yet the Government has banned it.

Such indicators must be preferable to vague references to risk in matters of crime, health and safety. Time was when we attributed many of life's risks to God. We called them Acts of God. Governments now like to play God, yet are prepared to take fewer risks. Ministers want their credit in this world, not the next. Risks are regulated, spread, insured against and sued over. Taking a risk is no longer an exercise of free will or responsibility. It is an act of folly from which a fatherly government must protect us.

Yet the worm might be turning. This weekend there is a rush to buy and freeze every T-bone steak and oxtail in the land. The public appears not to believe Dr Cunningham's scare-science. It has despaired of this Cabinet of nannies, thumb-suckers and baby-restrainers. It wants to be left to take risks on its own. Perhaps the public is not so bad at maths after all.

The new Home Secretary, Jack Straw, wants to emulate his Tory predecessor in his enthusiasm for prisons. But who would have thought that Labour's jails would be filled with foxhunting racing drivers, arrested on illegal doorsteps in possession of illegal steaks?

Philip Howard

■ Here's something foul, strange and (naturally) British

This is the season for Gothick Horror, that peculiarly British pleasure. So here is a horror film survival kit for the unwary faced with things on their screens to make *Carrie* look like *Little Women*.

1. On no account take a shower with a maniac/spirit/creature/or anxious young mummy's boy lurking down the passage in motel. In this genre naked escapades ALWAYS end in screams. So resist the urge to put on your birthday suit and frolic when danger is near. Ladies, high heels are *not* appropriate footwear for getaways from maniacs with knives or a thing arm'd with a rake.

2. When Boris Karloff or his epigoni (less frightening successors) wrapped in rotting mummy cerements stomp down the corridor uttering groans, on no account stop to ask them what is the matter. Run.

3. Never read from an ancient Sumerian text that summons demons. Even as a joke. If your friends persist in spite of your protests, leave, without making your excuses. You can make new friends. You will need to.

4. If you are running for your life away from a thing/maniac/monster/demon, expect to trip up and/or fall down at least twice. More if you are female and even partially disrobed. Never turn to look back. If you ignore this rule and do turn round, and do not see the maniac/creature/demon chasing you, stop and run back immediately the way you came. For the thing/alien/cannibal/psychotic is now in front of you.

5. Listen carefully to the soundtrack for audible hints of what is going on around you but lurks offscreen for the moment. If there is a slow, rhythmic crescendo, swim for your life. If there are screaming violins, it is already too late. Use all resources available. Watch the younger members of the audience for signs of imminent horror. In this genre they are far more winding-sheet-wise than you can ever hope to be.

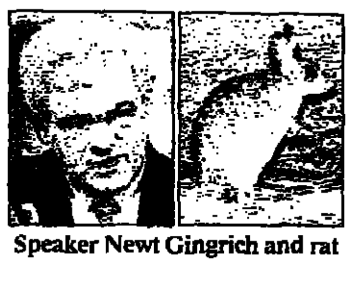
6. When you think that you have killed a maniac/creature/smiler with a knife, DO NOT check to see if he/she/it is really dead. Keep kebabbing it until it is in pieces small enough not to be a threat to you. Then set it on fire and barbecue it to cinders. This should work with everything except demons and spirits.

7. Horror is a British speciality, now adopted by Hollywood. Gothick Horror, as told by Mary Shelley, Bram Stoker, Robert Louis Stevenson and Conan Doyle, can be described as the greatest invention of 19th-century literature. But it is older than that. The oldest work of English literature tells how Beowulf kills the amphibious monster, Grendel — and his mother.

8. So if someone in the water starts screaming and is pulled under, do not go after him/her or peer over the edge of the shore (t)wittering what is wrong. Head for the hills. For our horror films have their goose-pimple commonplaces going back to the first stories told around the prehistoric campfire.

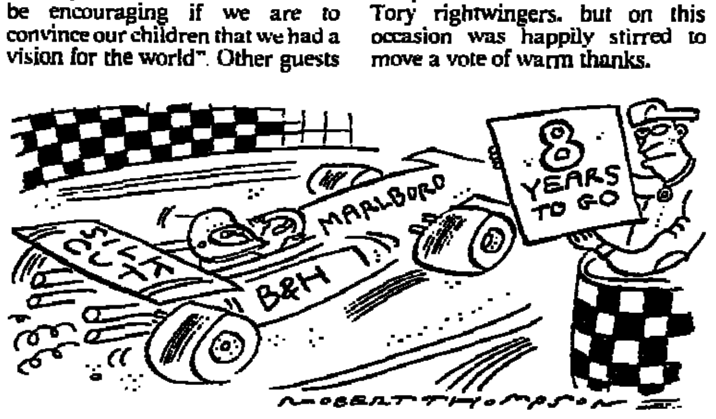
Furry friend

THIS is a tale of a rat and a Newt. When the Speaker of the House of Representatives swung into London this week, he spent the afternoon, naturally, at London Zoo. There, Newt Gingrich adopted a rat. So enamoured is he by his new pet that at dinner at Claridge's on Thursday night he could talk of little but his new Madagascan jumping rat. The furry beast is descended from a pair found on the island by the naturalist Gerald Durrell who was keen to protect the species. Winningly, it is one of the world's largest rodents. Newt might like to know that the giant rat "ploughs long deep furrows and feeds mainly on fallen fruit".



Speaker Newt Gingrich and rat

"He was so taken with our work, he was late for a meeting with William Hague," says Richard Burge, the zoo's Director General, who Newt dragged along to dinner. The Speaker will receive a certificate for his wall, along with a badge and his name on a board by the rat's cage. "He was delighted that we didn't receive government grants." Indeed, at dinner the rightwinger saw wider significance in his adoption, describing it as "exactly the investment we should be encouraging if we are to convince our children that we had a vision for the world". Other guests included Baroness Thatcher and Ken Clarke, who made disobliging comparisons between Newt and Tory rightwingers, but on this occasion was happily stirred to move a vote of warm thanks.



CHRIS Patten is at war. Not, this time, with the Chinese but with moles. The last Governor of Hong Kong, who withdrew to his old stone farmhouse in southern France after last summer, has been waking up to find dozens of molehills looming over sa pelouse. He has responded by launching an extermination campaign to ensure l'herbe can grow unmolested. So vigorous is his assault that he has had little time to write an account of his governorship, let alone plot a return to politics.

Wedding gift?

A LANDSCAPE by Winston Churchill has been sold for £150,000, a record for a duabing by the old boy. The purchaser was Lord Harris of Peckham, big in carpets and a friend of William Hague, prompting salesroom speculation that the work could be a wedding present for the Tory leader and Ffion. The pleasing work, *Mimizan, Landes*, depicting fields sloping to the shore near Bordeaux was one of Churchill's favourite scenes which he painted in 1927. It went under the hammer for more than double the pre-sale price. It would certainly remind Hague that Tory leaders can survive great tribulations.

THE TIMES DIARY

JASPER GERARD

OLD TIMES

Before Geoffrey Robinson, MP, bought the *New Statesman*, it distrusted business: "Those who own the means of production make profit from paying people less than they are worth — in Marx's terminology, by exploiting them." (Jan 1996, a month before Robinson took over.)

LIBERALISM has yet to breach the thick oak doors of Peterhouse College, Cambridge. In The Specator, *Maurice Cowling, Michael Portillo's former tutor, describes the "gay and lesbian lobbies" as "rancid and militant".*

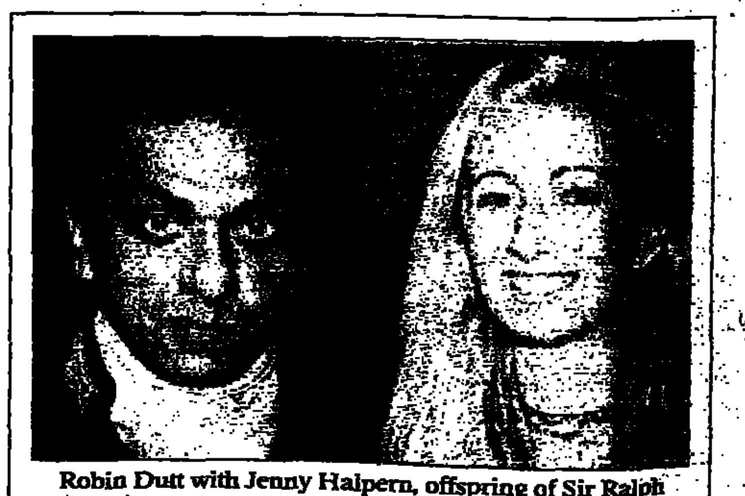
Churchill's Mimizan, Landes

Roy's own

TWO old Yorkshire Labour friends, David Blunkett and Lord Hattersley, have fallen out — big time. The Education Secretary has complained that the party's former deputy leader is "harassing" him. In a private letter to Alan Rusbridger, *Guardian* Editor, Blunkett pleads for him to stop publishing Roy's attacks. He says the paper "is rather over-dependent on one voice" and asks for "protection". The animosity stems from Hattersley's defence of Comprehensives. Blunkett favours, in buz lingo, "choice". Roy's attacks are vitriolic, accusing Blunkett of breaking promises. Blunkett wrote attacking Hattersley's "talent for creative prose", prompting Roy to fire back: "I feel only distaste for David Blunkett's political inconstancy." Rusbridger is refusing to bow to Blunkett's request. "It is a perfectly reasonable point of view, just one I happen not to agree with." The war still smoulders.

NEW TIMES

SADLY the *New Statesman* has little to say on Robinson's business dealings. A recent issue says: "Companies' profits benefit us all. Why is 'business' still virtually a swearword to many so-called opinion formers? We should be willing business to make profits."



Robin Dutt with Jenny Halpern, offspring of Sir Ralph

PARTY TIMES

SHOOTING and the death of capitalism were exercising David Tang, sociable shaker, at the International Interior Designer of the Year Awards at the V&A. "I'm going to Somerset to shoot pheasant but I fear my hosts may be disappointed," he warned, having shot only twice before. "I'm not a crack shot, more of a crap shot."

Tiger turmoil has made him pessimistic. "Hong Kong is living on borrowed time. It is still the strongest economy in the centre of Asia but it could have only 50 years remaining."

A "style guru", Robin Dutt, arrived with Jenny Halpern, offspring of Sir Ralph. "I'm a dandy in distress," pleaded Dutt, searching for champagne.

Reputations were at stake at Westminster where Andy Roth and Byron Criddle launched *New MPs of '97*. They have dug up some awkward information. Mark Oaten, MP, who has won Winchester twice in a year for the Liberal Democrats after the Tories forced a re-run, was more worried about his maiden speech: "You are supposed to praise your predecessor. But as I am him, I feel inhibited."

Austin Mitchell, MP, was yearning for the past: "It was much more fun in opposition. All these new female MPs hardly appear in the tea rooms or bars. They stay in their offices instead. The Commons has lost its clubbability. And when you visit ministers they sound like Tories — only more polite."

THE TIMES SATURDAY DECEMBER 13 1997

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TRUTH AND TRIAL

An unsatisfactory end to the Winnie Mandela affair

After seven hours of personal testimony which followed eight days of evidence from 43 witnesses against her, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela finally faced what passes for the wrath of Archbishop Desmond Tutu. After describing her as a "great person" whom he "loved very deeply", the Chairman of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission all but begged Mrs Mandela to offer some small signal of contrition. That is exactly what he got. A tiny acknowledgement that "things went wrong" in Soweto during the late 1980s, for which she was indeed "sorry". After that apparent triumph the confused relatives of the various victims of crimes visited by the infamous Mandela United Football Club were pushed in front of the alleged ringmaster for the ritual of reconciliation.

By Mrs Mandela's standards, the very few words of apology obtained constitute relative humility; most witnesses have been dismissed in curt terms. Their accusations were "ludicrous", "lunatic", "hallucinations" and "fabrications". She did not admit any role in the events surrounding the brutal death of 14-year-old Stompie Moeketsi Seipei. She instead offered an alternative explanation for her whereabouts on the day in question which, under cross-examination, collapsed completely. This only fuelled the cocktail of contempt and defiance with which she has conducted her case. At that moment, Archbishop Tutu somehow decided that the interests of truth and reconciliation had been satisfied.

This may well be the end of matters. The commission must now deliberate on the extraordinary events of the past two weeks. It will probably conclude that horrific incidents occurred, but will smother them by reference to the highly charged atmosphere in South Africa during apartheid's last years. It might even implicate Mrs Mandela in slightly stronger terms than did her farcical trial six years ago, which led to a suspended sentence for kidnapping. The archbishop's tribunal is not a court of law. A criminal prosecution would be more appropriate. The South African authorities could take matters into their own hands. But this would be a most unexpected development.

The ANC leaders will nonetheless be very satisfied with the archbishop's work. They had feared that a public forum would allow Mrs Mandela and her supporters to use such intimidation that no serious figures would present themselves. To some degree that concern was justified. There were attempts to discredit certain witnesses and even the relatives of the deceased faced some harassment. On the whole, however, many more offered their testimony than at one stage had seemed possible. The whole drama was broadcast live on South African television. The audience figures, in black slums and white suburbs alike, were enormous. The vast majority of viewers will have drawn their own conclusion.

This means that Mrs Mandela is much less likely to emerge as ANC Deputy President after the party congress later this month. That post would be her springboard to the position of South Arican deputy president in 18 months time. As it is, the damage inflicted will probably be enough to ensure the election of Jacob Zuma — the candidate backed by Nelson Mandela. Most South African citizens and all international investors would doubtless be relieved at this result. The ANC wanted Mrs Mandela discredited, but without a formal trial that could in turn discredit them. They may now get precisely that outcome.

This would be a throughly pyrrhic victory for party and country. Mrs Mandela will continue to exercise a disproportionate political presence. Her mixture of revolutionary rhetoric and race hatred will continue to find a constituency. In any ordinary circumstances where 43 witnesses implicated an individual in murder, kidnapping and torture, a trial would swiftly follow. That is what should happen here. The ANC and Archbishop Tutu still seem willing to pursue a process that will ultimately produce neither the truth nor reconciliation. That should be to their enduring shame.

STEEPLES OF LONDON

Wren's churches still have their part to play in a living City

Some of the best news that London has had for a long time is that Sir Christopher Wren's City churches have been saved by the Church of England. As our religion correspondent reported earlier this week, the church authorities have now rejected the 1994 Templeman Commission's recommendation that the number of active churches in the City should be reduced from 36 to 12.

If the decision had gone the other way, the unwanted places of worship might not have been demolished, but many would have been locked and left to moulder. Now they will all remain consecrated, many will become centres of healing and religious education, and a community of monks is coming to live in one of them — probably the great, under-used church of St Sepulchre, just off Holborn Viaduct, whence the pilgrims to Jerusalem once set out.

This should all tempt the great daytime population of the City at least to look at Wren's architectural miracles more closely as they pass. When Wren built them after the Great Fire, of course, those shining new marble steeples rose above the rebuilt houses. In place of the old Gothic spires, soaring up in a single joyous movement, these new steeples took the eye up from a pediment to a parapet with urns, on to a fine octagonal lantern, and from the lantern via a lead spire to a golden ball. It was the new, calm, rational way to Heaven.

In recent years, though, the churches have become practically Gothic again. They lurk in the shadows under towering blocks: mysterious, haunting places. They only reveal themselves as monuments to a bright, well-lit religion when you open the door and step (as T. S. Eliot put it) into "inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold".

The initiatives to open those doors more often will include tours pointing out the historical personages associated with them, who will be separated into "Saints and Sinners". Even St Peter (whose keys to Heaven and Hell can be seen on a weathervane over his church in Cornhill) might have balked at that task, especially when confronted by the shades of such characters as the merry Samuel Pepys. But there are other, less tendentious themes that a City rambler might take up.

For instance, a recent book, *The City Churches of Sir Christopher Wren* by Paul Jeffrey, suggests that Wren was much influenced by a visit to Paris he made just before the Fire. He was especially struck by the splendid domes of the Sorbonne and the Val de Grace. So in addition to his stupendous undertaking at St Paul's, he deftly introduced domes into some of his new, smaller churches, the finest being at St Stephen's, Walbrook, where the dome is supported inside by 16 columns that dance around the vistor in true Baroque style as he walks about. A search for those domes might give the eye a proper architectural perspective — before the vast Greenwich Dome looms up on the City's horizon.

SCORE WARS

Iran vs America in the real battle of the World Cup

Traffic came to a halt, sirens blared, women ululated, and men and women, risking the wrath of the religious police, were dancing in the streets when the news came through. As Iran was celebrating its victory over Australia and its qualification for the final round of next year's football World Cup, the crowds learnt that Iran has been drawn to play in the same group as the United States. All the jubilation of the past week has suddenly been focused on one extraordinary encounter: the showdown with Iran's nemesis, the Great Satan. For the past 18 years millions of voices have chanted in unison "Marg bar Amrika" — "Down with America" — with never a glimpse of an American. Now 11 men from the two countries are pitted against each other, face-to-face, in the mother of all grudge matches.

For once, Iran believes, it has been offered a level playing field. Its own team is supremely confident, hailed as heroes after saving national honour in Melbourne. During a disastrous first half, more than a dozen distraught Iranian viewers suffered heart attacks as Australia forged ahead by two goals to nil. But then the fervour that seems the birthright of every Iranian kicked in: in three minutes they scored two goals. The team was through to the finals in France.

The United States, invincible in battle, is patently vulnerable on the pitch. Soccer is not an American game. Despite hosting the 1994 World Cup, the American public is still beholden to the gridiron and the baseball diamond. Major league soccer is still in its infancy, with little chance for American players to demonstrate their prowess. No native striker has emerged as an international celebrity.

A boycott is out of the question: with iron rules, Fifa, the international football federation, ensures that he who brings politics on to the pitch pays a lasting penalty. Exclusion from future competitions is a deterrent that has brought together competitors who otherwise stand on the brink of war.

Football is, of course, the pursuit of warfare by other means. In some countries, however, the game has come first and the warfare later. El Salvador went to war with Honduras in 1969, as the two sides attempted to redeem honour in a more explosive way before world referees blew the whistle. A Colombian player who scored an own goal paid with his life: the drug barons who owned the team were so incensed that they had him shot. Tyrants' rage knows no bounds when the goals go the wrong way: both Saddam Hussein and Colonel Gaddafi have waved not only red cards at losing sides, but taken the big stick of reprisals even to the soles of the players' feet.

Maybe the spirit of gamesmanship will fill the stadium when the Iranians and Americans meet. The ritual joust, today's equivalent of challenge by single combat, may do what ping-pong once did for America and China. If so, it will be another victory not only for the world's favourite game, but for those former English public schoolboys who formulated the rules of the new warfare that does not spill blood — too often.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Let nature take its final course

From Mrs D. A. Moore

Sir, My husband died yesterday from a cruel illness. Eight days ago he decided that it was time for him to die. I agreed with him. Had euthanasia been lawful (letters, December 1) we would have availed ourselves of it immediately. As it was not, we felt that we had no choice but to allow nature to take its course.

The result was that my husband had several days which, as he confirmed in conscious moments, were perfectly comfortable although of no practical use to him. However for me, and our young children, these same days allowed us to nurse him and show him love and care, and fully to realise that the time had indeed come and we were all at peace with it.

Had my husband and I had our earlier wish, our children would not have had this opportunity to show that love, which I have no doubt will stand them in good stead in the future. Even if the patient is merely passive, great good can come from the goodness it elicits in others.

Yours faithfully,
DINAH MOORE,
c/o Messrs Parker Bullen (solicitors),
45 Castle Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire.
December 1.

From Professor Lord Alton of Liverpool

Sir, Mr Joe Ashton, MP (letter, December 1), claims that his Doctor Assisted Dying Bill is needed because "the law lacks clarity and is ambiguous". Yet only a week ago a government minister, Lord Williams of Mostyn, said the law was not "difficult or obscure".

Mr Ashton's Bill would commission doctors and nurses to preside over their patients' deaths. For him to claim that his Bill is "not about euthanasia" amply demonstrates where the confusion lies.

The Voluntary Euthanasia Society is waging a systematic and expensive campaign, using all the old ploys of hard cases, euphemism, and promises of two doctors required to sign forms of authorisation. Thirty years and five million abortions have shown to what enormities these arguments lead.

In Holland, the Remmelink Commission, established in 1990 by the Dutch Attorney-General, found that in one recent year, of 3,300 euthanasia deaths, 1,030 involved patients who had made no such "voluntary" request. Compulsion and pressure are never far behind the voluntary arrangements which Mr Ashton has in mind.

The British Medical Association well understands this, and has trenchantly held euthanasia to be morally, legally and medically unacceptable. Parliament should ensure that it remains that way.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID ALTON,
House of Lords.
December 1.

From Dr S. Hasan

Sir, My organisation, Islamic Concern, supports all campaigners against euthanasia and also endorses Cardinal Basil Hume's article, "The death of trust" (November 27).

We believe that any doctor who deliberately ends the life of a patient, even at that patient's request, betrays his profession, his oath, God and all religions. Such action is against the welfare of any patient in this life and in the afterlife.

To help to reduce such requests from sick people, we need to publicise and expand the hospice movement, work on relationships to grow close family ties and make every patient loved and wanted by the family, society, the NHS and the State. All medical technology should be used to relieve pain. Only God, the Creator of all, is the owner of life and only He will decide about its end.

Islamic Concern is to campaign against Mr Joe Ashton's Bill, which he is introducing to Parliament on December 10.

Yours faithfully,
SUHAIB HASAN
(Religious Adviser),
Islamic Concern,
31 North Circular Road, N13.

From Mrs M. Campbell-Preston

Sir, The Reverend Dr John Searle (letter, December 1) rightly says that it is not in a person's best interest to use methods to prolong dying and "it was this principle which the courts applied to Tony Bland", the Hillsborough football disaster victim. The fact is Mr Bland was not dying. Although apparently without awareness, he could breathe unaided and there was reflex reaction to painful stimuli.

The High Court ruled that treatment, and this included nourishment via a gastric tube, could be withdrawn. But it seems illogical to call nourishment a treatment, as it cures no medical condition. Food and fluids are essential to maintain life and without them we die.

Tony Bland was not dying until the feeding tube was removed and he was denied nourishment. A legal ruling sanctioned the death by starvation of a hospital patient. This cannot have been in the patient's best interest.

Yours faithfully,
MARGARET CAMPBELL-PRESTON
(SRN, 1947-55),
1 Bishop's Way,
Stradbroke, Eye, Suffolk.
December 4.

Isaacs replies to Kaufman charges

From Sir Jeremy Isaacs

Sir, Gerald Kaufman's committee makes two charges against me and colleagues (reports and leading article, December 4: letters, December 5). He is critical of plans for closure, and of the alleged absence of financial information and of management systems at the Royal Opera House.

Closure first. Though I did not finalise them, I take full responsibility for the House's plans for the closure period, and for the decision that the two companies play in various venues. Though the committee paid it too little attention, the fact is that there was no single, affordable theatre, or other venue, available to ROH as a fixed base.

We surveyed, costed, sought to negotiate for every possible suitable site in London. They are few. The Lyceum option cost £7 million more than we knew we could afford; we would have been able to give fewer performances in it than we give now.

It has been a stickyish start, but even at Labatt's Apollo in Hammersmith the Royal Ballet played to the equivalent of 25 completely sold-out performances at Covent Garden. Eighty per cent audiences have enjoyed opera at the Barbican, the Shaftesbury and the Royal Albert Hall. It is too early to judge performance overall in the 27-month closure period.

The Kaufman committee makes a more serious charge: that the House operated without financial information or system of management. This is totally false. Anyone who saw the BBC Television series *The House* at the beginning of 1996 will remember the hard time board members gave the executive over identified overspends (though each incidentally was recouped). The board had ammunition: detailed, accurate information made available at finance committee, at senior management, at subsidiary and at main board meetings.

What the select committee has done is confuse the current genuine difficulty of forecasting forward income in the novel circumstance of closure with supposed absence of regular management accounts. But of course these existed. They set out, each month, income earned, cost incurred, and every variation from budget (which helped us balance the books most years, and launch and control the development).

To suggest so emphatically that this information was not provided casts a wholly unwarranted slur on me, on two dedicated chairmen, on two capable finance directors, on a first-class chief accountant, and an able acting finance director; on our meticulous auditors, KPMG, who noted no such deficiency, and on Arts Council officers who are supposed to have connived in this imaginary black hole.

Kaufman signalled his intentions in his first remarks from the committee's chair and confirms them in his article in this week's *Spectator*, flagged "What I've got against Covent Garden". But the House will, somehow, come through.

Yours sincerely,
JEREMY ISAACS
(General Director,
Royal Opera House, 1988-97),
Jeremy Isaacs Productions,
8 Shelton Street, WC2.
December 5.

Opera's future

From Lord Gibson

Sir, Continental opera houses are more heavily subsidised than our own because they have for several hundred years been considered an essential part of national culture, in a way which has begun to develop here only in the last fifty.

If we want opera houses at international standards, developing the art of opera as well as playing the popular repertoire at popular prices, they will cost the public more than they do now. In mainland Europe this is not grudged. Here it has yet to be accepted.

If it is ever to be accepted, the facts need to be understood. In the absence of continental-type subsidy, seat prices have to be high, leading to charges of "elitism" which in turn endanger even existing levels of subsidy.

The Arts Council grant has declined in real terms for five years. Thus finance and management problems deriving from the close-down period are irrelevant in the longer term.

Sir Richard Eyre is to report, as I understand it, essentially on what kind of opera and ballet we can have for our money. But without more money, whatever management changes are introduced, one of our opera houses will have to go — to my mind an absurd and unnecessary tragedy.

It would certainly be absurd to make important changes until his report can be considered.

Yours etc,
GIBSON
(Chairman, Arts Council, 1972-77;
Board member, Royal Opera House,
1977-87),
4 Swan Walk, SW3.
December 4.

From the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport

Sir, Edwina Currie — with a typically sublime disregard for accuracy — claims (letter, December 5) that I "fail to pay tribute" to the English National Opera.

On the contrary, I have the highest possible regard for ENO; and an absolute precondition of Richard Eyre's consideration of the future of lyric theatre in London is the maintenance of the company's artistic integrity and distinctiveness.

Any proposal for the future that failed to do that would certainly not get my support.

Yours sincerely,
CHRIS SMITH,
Department for Culture,
Media and Sport,
2-4 Cockspur Street, SW1.
December 5.

Tax-free investment

From Mr Dean R. Pope

Sir, A point not mentioned in your report today, "How to keep investments tax-free", is that if an individual invests in an offshore account, such as in the Channel Islands, and then dies, his personal representatives will have to obtain a grant of probate or, if he died intestate, a grant of letters of administration, not only in England but also in the Channel Islands, to enable the money to be returned to this country. This will usually involve the deceased's estate in an expense of several hundred pounds.

I wonder if financial institutions recommending offshore investment are mentioning the costs that will be incurred after death in obtaining a second grant to enable the return of the funds.

From my experience many relatives believe their deceased family member did not receive any advice at the time of investment on this point.

Yours faithfully,
DEAN R. POPE
(Solicitors' probate manager),
8 Doubletrees,
St Blazey Gate, Par, Cornwall.
December 3.

From Mr B. W. Chanter

Sir, Are we as a nation to be ruled by lottery? I see that our personal future financial arrangements, or Isas, are to have a £1,000 monthly draw built in (report, December 4).

Furthermore, I now realise that my decision ten years ago to opt for Peps rather than AVCs (additional voluntary contributions) for my pension arrangements (a practice subsequently recommended by numerous financial advisers), was a lottery. I lost; with AVCs, I would, at least, have the tax relief on the contributions in the bag.

Now that retroactive taxation seems to be an established government principle, could the Government please let me know now how I can, well into the final decade of my working life, plan to supplement effectively the pitiful pension I am expecting to draw from my company pension scheme?

Yours (a prudent middle-class,
hoping to have more than £50,000
invested when I retire, voter),
B. W. CHANTER,
35 Tiverton Road,
Potters Bar, Hertfordshire.
December 4.

Weekend Money letters, page 61

Sandhurst gifts

From Mr T. J. Martin

Sir, The allegations of Sandhurst instructors receiving excessive gifts from students (report, November 29) are rather sad and, I hope, untrue.

I only ever remember an overseas cadet being singled out for special treatment once. It was during a lecture in the Woolwich Hall. These periods were considered by the cadets to be an excellent opportunity to catch up on much-needed sleep.

The hall was warm and dark and most succumbed, particularly if the lecture was after lunch. It was the job of each platoon colour sergeant to ensure their charges stayed awake and, consequently, most lectures were accompanied by the sound of gentle snoring and the occasional *clack* of a pace stick being tapped on a cadet's head.

After one particularly turgid lecture, a cadet complained to our colour sergeant, asking why a Middle Eastern student next to him had been left to sleep undisturbed for over an hour. The colour sergeant, an enormous Scots Guardsman and veteran of the Falklands campaign two years previously, replied that it was "Quite simple if you think about it, Sir. I'll bet you a penny to a pinch of . . . that we'll be fighting them in five years' time, so the less they know the better!"

I do not know whether he found himself out in the Gulf some six years later, but a number of my fellow cadets certainly did.

Yours etc,
T. J. MARTIN,
Shelley Dairy,
Shelley, Ipswich, Suffolk.
December 2.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046.
e-mail to: *letters@the-times.co.uk*

English cuisine a bit of a mouthful

From Lady Jay

Sir, How good to read your leading article, "The English fool" (November 29), in praise of British cooking. I am glad to say that it has more and more fans on this side of the Channel — not least the 12,000 or so guests who come to this embassy every year.

Le Yorkshire Pudding and Le Crumble have long been favourites. But Welsh Salt Duck, Norfolk Million Pie, Durham Bacon Cakes, Colcannon, Edinburgh Fog and Kedgeree go down a treat too — not to speak of English wine and beer, Scotch and Northern Irish whisky, Somerset cider brandy and, of course, our splendid cheeses. You can now even buy Stinking Bishop in Paris.

Yours sincerely,
SYLVIA JAY,
British Embassy,
35 Rue du Faubourg St-Honoré,
75383 Paris.
November 30.

From Mr Jeremy Davies

Sir, The realisation of our national heritage in the culinary department still has a long way to go. However, a movement called "Slow Food" — which is promoting the preparation, cooking and enjoyment of local food and local traditions — has a strong following in various European countries, and is starting to make an impact here.

It works through local organisations (called appropriately "convivia"). The umbrella organisation, based in Italy, acts as a clearing house for ideas and exchanges, and produces a magazine, *Slow*.

The movement represents the complete antithesis of fast food. It seeks to revive local culinary traditions, encourage local producers and stimulate learning about other cultures. Above all, by encouraging us to take time and pleasure over preparing and eating our food, it puts a brake on our increasingly frenetic way of life.

Yours faithfully,
JEREMY DAVIES,
78 Somerset Place,
Stoke, Plymouth, South Devon.
devontroll@classic.msn.com
December 1.

From Professor Emeritus Gordon Lawrence

Sir, Your leading article led me to reflect upon a recent visit to a further education college in southwest England which has a distinguished hotel and catering department. The head of department, who travels widely in Europe and Scandinavia, agreed with me that the best value for money in Western Europe (and indeed some of the best cooking) is to be found in English pubs.

In this part of the country along the Welsh Marches, fresh produce and succulent dishes of selected beef, Welsh lamb, venison and duckling cooked traditionally are to be found in abundance. Much locally brewed beer and cider provide a perfect accompaniment.

Yours etc,
GORDON LAWRENCE,
The Coach House, Church Street,
Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire.
December 1.

Oaths of allegiance

From Lord Beloff

Sir, Professor Keith Kyle's letter today betrays a confusion of thought surprising in so distinguished a writer.

What Charles Bradlaugh objected to in the oath of allegiance was its religious foundation, unacceptable to one of his beliefs. The problem was met by giving the alternative of "affirmation", just as previously the words "the true faith of a Christian" had been deleted in order to allow a professing Jew to sit in the House of Commons.

What Messrs Adams and McGuinness object to is not the form of the oath but that it pledges those who take it to uphold the Constitution of the United Kingdom of which the monarch is the symbol. Since to be a Member of the House of Commons means taking part in the constitutional process, accepting the validity of that process must surely be a condition of participation.

Would the Americans open the doors of the White House to a President-elect who refused to swear to uphold the Constitution of the United States?

Yours truly,
BELOFF,
House of Lords.
December 4.

In for a penny

From Mr Nicolas Heslop

Sir, MPs apparently "fell about" at the Prime Minister's description of the Liberal Democrats' tax and spend plans as "the longest p in history" (Political Sketch, December 4). However, this is not the first occasion that the House of Commons has heard such a play on words.

On February 5 last, Robin Squire, the then Schools Minister, told the House that "never was a penny spent more often than during a Liberal Democrat speech."

Yours faithfully,
NICOLAS HESLOP,
133 Barden Road, Tonbridge, Kent.
December 5.

COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
December 5: The President of the Federative Republic of Brazil and Senhora Cardoso, with the Brazilian Suite in attendance, left Buckingham Palace this morning upon the conclusion of the State Visit to The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh.

The President drove to Great George Street Conference Centre, London SW1, where His Excellency held a Press Conference.

His Excellency Mr Philip Lader was received in audience by The Queen and presented the Letters of Recall of his predecessor and his own Letters of Credence as Ambassador from the United States of America to the Court of St James's.

Mrs Lader was also received by Her Majesty.

Sir John Kerr (Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs) was present.

The President of the European Parliament (Mr Jose Maria Gil-Robles Gil-Delgado) was received by Her Majesty.

The Lord Mackay of Clashfern was received by The Queen when Her Majesty invested him with the Insignia of a Knight of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle.

The Earl of Airlie KT (Lord Chamberlain) was present at Heathrow Airport, London, this morning upon the Departure of The President of the Federative Republic of Brazil and Senhora Cardoso and bade farewell to His Excellency and Senhora Cardoso on behalf of The Queen.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
December 5: The Princess Royal, accompanied by Captain Timothy Laurence RN, this morning departed Peru for Paraguay.

Her Royal Highness this afternoon arrived in Asunción, Paraguay, and was received by Señora Teresa Carrasco de Wasmosy (wife of The President).

The Princess Royal later visited the Centro Anglo Paraguayo, Asunción.

Her Royal Highness afterwards visited the Education Centre for Young Adults, Caacupe-Mi.

The Princess Royal subsequently visited the Albino Luis Home for abandoned mentally handicapped children, Asunción.

This evening Her Royal Highness was entertained to Dinner by The President of the Republic of Paraguay at Mburuvicha Roga, the Residence.

Today's royal engagement

The Duchess of Gloucester, patron, National Association for Gifted Children, will attend a concert to mark the 30th anniversary of the association, at Trinity College of Music, Mandeville Place, London W1, at 5.25.

Young Old Millhillians

The 1997 Annual Young Old Millhillians Club Christmas Event will be held at Brown's Hotel, London, on Tuesday, December 16. President of the Club, Bill Skinner, will be Guest of Honour. Tickets are available from the Club Secretary on 0181 959 0816.

Ball

British-Italian Society
The Italian Ambassador and Signora Galli were the guests of honour at a Ball held by the British-Italian Society at the Savoy Hotel last night. Sir Patrick Fairweather, the Society's chairman, presided.

Sunderland High School

The Council of The Church Schools Company is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr Angela Slater as Head of Sunderland High School with effect from September 1998, to succeed Miss Charlotte Rendle-Short following her appointment as Deputy Chief Executive of The Church Schools Company. Dr Slater is currently Head of Russian, Social Service and dealings with universities at Eton College.

Dinner

Staffordshire Lieutenancy
Mr James Hawley, Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire, was entertained at dinner last night at the County Buildings, Stafford, by the Deputy Lieutenants. Colonel D.J.K. German, Vice Lord-Lieutenant, presided.

University news

Stirling: Dame Diana Rigg will succeed Lord Balfour of Burleigh as Chancellor of the university from August 1, 1998.

Service dinner

1st Regiment RHA
Past and present members of 1st Regiment Royal Horse Artillery held their annual Reunion Dinner in Woolwich last night. Major General M.T. Tennant, CB, Honorary Regimental Colonel, presided. Field Marshal Lord Vincent of Coleshill, Master Gunner St James's Park, was the principal guest.

Luncheons

Institute of United States Studies
Mr Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the American House of Representatives, was the principal guest at a luncheon of the Institute of United States Studies held yesterday in Lincoln's Inn. Baroness Thatcher, LG, OM, FRS, chairman of the institute, presided. Mr Robert Worcester and Lord Rees-Mogg also spoke. Among others present were:
The Ambassador of Bahrain, Lord Woolf, Mr Conrad Black, Mr William Cash, MP, Mrs Marianne Gingrich, Professor Gary McDowell, Professor Kenneth Minogue, Mr John Wood and Mrs Sally McNulty.

Saints and Sinners Club
Mr John Major, MP, was the guest of honour at the Saints and Sinners Christmas luncheon held yesterday at the Savoy Hotel. Mr Jimmy Tarbuck, chairman, and Mr Neil Benson, honorary secretary, also spoke.

Reception

Royal Shakespeare Company
The Lord Mayor and the Lady Mayoress, accompanied by the Sheriffs and their ladies, attended a buffet supper and reception held last night at the Barbican Centre to mark the close and productive relationship between the Corporation of London and the Barbican Theatre. Sir Geoffrey Cass, Chairman of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre Trust, was the host. A performance of *Hamlet* was held afterwards. Ambassadors, High Commissioners, past and present Masters of City Livery Companies, representatives of City Institutions, Aldermen, members of the Court of Common Council and heads of British and Overseas banks were among the guests.

Appointments

Assembly of Western European Union
Mr Colin Cameron has been elected as the first British Clerk of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Western European Union from July 1, 1998.

Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh
Professor James Colquhoun Petrie has been elected President of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. Professor David Hamilton Lawson has been elected Vice-President.

ADRIAN SHERRATT

Kate Privett of Battersea and Colin Howman of Fulham who have recently announced their engagement

Forthcoming marriages

Mr J.R. Baldwin and Miss N.E. Langridge
The engagement is announced between Jonathan Robert, son of Mr and Mrs William Baldwin, of Kenilworth, Warwickshire, and Nicola Elisabeth, daughter of Mr and Mrs Roger Langridge, of Winson, Gloucestershire.

Mr R.J. Fisher and Miss R.K.A. Rigby
The engagement is announced between Robert, son of Mr and Mrs John Fisher, of Sittingbourne, Kent, and Rachael, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Noel Rigby, of Newport, Shropshire.

Mr A.I.G. Lawson-Dick and Miss S. Betts
The engagement is announced between Andrew, elder son of Mr and Mrs Charles Lawson-Dick, of Owston, Leicestershire, and Sallyann, only daughter of Mr and Mrs Edward Betts, of Davenham, Cheshire.

Mr D.S. Noble and Miss A.L.V. Golley
The engagement is announced between David, youngest son of Mr and Mrs William Noble, of Boston, Massachusetts, and Louise, only daughter of Mr and Mrs Alastair Golley, of Dinas Powis, Vale of Glamorgan.

Mr R.A.B. Smith and Miss A. Kempton
The engagement is announced between Richard, second son of Mr and Mrs Alastair Smith, of Great Bridgeford, Staffordshire, and Annie, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs Colin Kempton, of Reigate, Surrey.

Mr P.J. Weinhold and Miss E.R. Frank
The marriage will take place on Saturday, July 4, 1998, at 3pm, at St Andrew's Church, Greystoke, Cumbria, of Mr Phillippe Justin Weinhold, son of Mr and Mrs A.J. Weinhold, and Miss Emma Rachel Frank, daughter of Canon and Mrs R.P.H. Frank.

Mr G.P. Weldon and Miss S.K. le Huray
The engagement is announced between Guy, younger son of Mr and Mrs Patrick Weldon, of London, and Sarah, daughter of the late Dr Peter le Huray and of Mrs Bridget le Huray, of Cambridge.

Marriages

Mr I.R. Bowker and Miss S. McLeod
The marriage took place on Friday, December 5, in Macclesfield, Cheshire, between Mr Ian Bowker, son of Mr and Mrs Robert Bowker, of Heaton Moor, Cheshire, and Miss Seona McLeod, daughter of Professor and Mrs David McLeod, of Woodford, Cheshire.

A dinner dance was held at Shrigley Hall, Pott Shrigley and the honeymoon will be spent in Singapore and the Maldives.

Mr J.R.E. Warburton and Mrs P.J. Ottewell
After a service on Friday, December 5, 1997, at St Margaret's, Lothbury, to celebrate the marriage of John Warburton and Pamela Ottewell, a luncheon was held at the Armourers' Hall before they departed for the Far East.

Weekend anniversaries

TODAY: BIRTHS: King Henry VI, reigned 1422-61 and 1470-71, Windsor, 1421; Warren Hastings, 1st Governor-General of India, Churchill, Oxfordshire, 1732; Sir Osbert Sitwell, writer, London, 1892; Ira Gershwin, composer, New York, 1896.

DEATHS: Jean Baptiste Chardin, painter, Paris, 1779; Joseph Black, chemist, Edinburgh, 1799; Anthony Trollope, novelist, London, 1882; Jean Blanc, socialist and historian, Cannes, 1882; Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States in the American Civil War 1861-65, New Orleans, 1889; Ernst Werner von Siemens, engineer, Berlin, 1892; Roy Orbison, singer, Nashville, Tennessee, 1988.

Today is the feast day of St Nicholas, patron saint of youth, popularly known as Santa Claus.

Christopher Columbus discovered Hispaniola, now Haiti and the Dominican Republic, 1492.

The Irish Free State was proclaimed, 1921.

TOMORROW: BIRTHS: Gian Bernini, sculptor, Naples, 1598; Allan Cunningham, writer, Keir, Dumfriesshire, 1784; Sir Redvers Buller, VC, general, Crediton, Devon, 1839; Sir Joseph Cook, Prime Minister of Australia 1913-14, Silverdale, Staffordshire, 1860; Pietro Mascagni, composer, Leghorn, 1863; Willa Cather, novelist, Winchester, Virginia, 1873; Rudolf Friml, composer, Prague, 1879; Stuart Davis, painter, Philadelphia, 1894.

DEATHS: Marcus Tullius Cicero, Roman orator and statesman, executed, Formia, Italy, 43 BC; Meindert Hobbema, landscape painter, Amsterdam, 1709; Michel Ney, commander of Napoleon's Old Guard, shot for high treason, Paris, 1815; William Bligh, admiral, Captain of *HMS Bounty*, London, 1817; John Flaxman, sculptor, London, 1826; Edward Irving, founder of the Holy Catholic Apostolic Church, Glasgow, 1834; Vicomte Ferdinand de Lesseps, promoter of the Suez Canal, La Chenaie, Belgium, 1894; Kirsten Flagstad, soprano, Oslo, 1962; Thornton Wilder, novelist and dramatist, New Haven, Connecticut, 1975; Robert Graves, poet and novelist, Deya, Majorca, 1985.

The Theatre Royal, Covent Garden (now the Royal Opera House), opened, 1732.

William Pitt the Younger, aged 24, became the youngest British Prime Minister, 1783.

Army 6th Form Scholarships

The following have been awarded Army Scholarships for eventual entry to RMA Sandhurst:

James Beazley, Haileybury Coll; James Berry, Lutterworth Grammar S; Annabel Bonas, Oxford High School; Jonathan Buckley, Portsmouth Grammar S; Edward Button, Harrow School; Christopher Charnley, Monmouth School; Christopher Crauford, Haileybury Coll; Simon Cross, Sedbergh School; Edward Dannatt, Harrow School; Winton De St John-Pryce, Stonyhurst Coll; Lucy Edwards, The Hulme Grammar S; Thomas Falkus, Latymer Upper School; Bond Faulkner, Pate's Grammar S; Ian Foster, Rendcomb Coll; Timothy Gardner, Magdalen Coll School; Harry Hadden-Paton, Eton Coll; Robert Hamilton, Aylesbury Grammar S; Sarah Hammond, Stockport Grammar, S; Anthony Harris, Adams Grammar S; Jonathan Harris, Cranleigh School; Siobhan Hill, Queen Elizabeth School Barnet; Robert Hoey, Sherborne School; Benjamin Horan, The John Fisher School, Surrey; Thomas Huitson, King Edward VI School, Southampton; Marie Hunston, Penistone Grammar S, Sheffield; Katherine Ivan-Duke, Newcastle under Lyme School; Robert Jeffs, Kent Coll, Canterbury; Richard Leigh-Wood, Harrow School; Lila Lewis, Christ's Hospital, Horsham; James Lyon, Stowe School; Nicholas Mantell, Bedford School; Andrew Muir, St Peter's School, York; David Noad, Harrow School; Thomas Oakley, Harrow School; Thomas Ollier, Farnborough VI Form Coll; Adrian Pask, Stamford School, Lincolnshire; Caroline Smith, Sydenham High School; Nicholas Tobin, Eton Coll; Steven Tunnicliffe, The Oratory School, Reading; Benjamin Walker, Cheltenham Bournside School; Henry Waller, Duke of York's Royal Military School; Christopher Warner, Queen Elizabeth's Grammar S, Derbyshire; James Westropp, Sherborne School; Hannah Wyke, West Buckland School, Devon.

Weekend birthdays

TODAY:
Lord Ashley of Stoke, CH, 75; the Right Rev Patrick Barry, former Abbot of Ampleforth, 80; Mr Dave Brubeck, musician, 77; Vice-Admiral Sir John Cadell, 68; Lord Clinton-Davis, 69; Air Marshal Sir John Curtiss, 73; Lord Emslie, 78; Mr Gerry Francis, footballer, 46; Mr Derek Hill, artist, 81; Mr Jonathan King, broadcaster, 53; Mrs Helen Liddell, MP, 47; Sir Richard Lloyd, former chairman, Vickers, 69; Sir Nicholas Lyell, QC, MP, 59.

The Right Rev Eric Mercer, former Bishop of Exeter, 80; Sir George Pinker, former Surgeon-Gynaecologist to The Queen, 73; Lord Porter of Luddenham, OM, FRS, 77; Mr Alastair Ross Goobey, chief executive, Hermes Pensions Management, 52; Sir Bryan Thwaites, former Principal, Westfield College, 74; Mr Charles Vance, director and theatrical producer, 68; the Right Rev Peter Walker, former Bishop of Ely, 78; Mr Peter Willey, cricketer, 48.

TOMORROW:
Sir Fred Atkinson, former civil servant, 78; Mr Roy Avery, former Headmaster, Bristol Grammar School, 72; Viscount Boyd of Merton, 58; Judge Lord Elystan-Morgan, 65; Mr David Evans, trade unionist, 62; Mr Kaffe Fassett, textile designer, 60; Professor Lawrence Freedman, FBA, war historian, 49; Professor Sir Abraham Goldberg, physician, 74; Professor N. Gowar, Principal, Royal Holloway University of London, 57; Dr A.J. Higgins, director, Animal Health Trust, Newmarket, 49; Sir Bryan Hopkin, former civil servant, 83; Mr Chris Joynt, rugby league player, 36; Mr Victor Kiam, chairman and chief executive officer, Remington Products Company, 71; the Countess of Limerick, 62; Sir Sydney Samuelson, British Film Commissioner, 72; Mr Roger J. Taylor, executive deputy chairman, Sun & Sun Alliance Insurance Group, 56; the Rev R.C.Trounson, former Principal, St Chad's College, Durham, 71; Mr Eli Wallach, actor, 82; Miss Helen Watts, opera singer, 70.

ROY ORBISON

Roy Orbison, the American pop singer whose melodramatic ballads were a feature of hit parades around the world in the early 1960s, died on December 6, aged 52, in Tennessee, after a heart attack.

Orbison possessed an extraordinarily powerful voice, usually to be heard expressing shades of anguish in such songs as *Only The Lonely*, *Running Scared* and *It's Over*.

In the early days of rock 'n' roll, among a generation of youthful performers who became as notorious for their hip-swivelling gyrations as for their singing, Orbison was the exception: his absolute immobility on stage emphasized the intense introspection of his songs. Later on, any audience's response was coloured also by an awareness of the genuine tragedies which had beset him, including the accidental deaths of his first wife and two of his sons.

He enjoyed to an unusual degree the respect and affection of succeeding generations of pop stars, many of whom acknowledged his influence. That peer-group admiration took a tangible form recently when, more than 20 years after his heyday, Orbison re-emerged as a member of the Traveling Wilburys, an ensemble whose fictional identity also cloaked the presence of Bob Dylan and George Harrison. Their album is currently in the US top ten.

ON THIS DAY

December 6, 1988

Roy Orbison's influence was acknowledged by generations of pop stars. The genuine tragedies that beset his life affected his songs and his audiences' response to them

Born in Vernon, Texas on April 23, 1936, Roy Kelton Orbison was taught to play the guitar by his father, an oil-field worker, at the age of six. Two years later he made his radio debut; he was 14 when he joined the first of his bands.

He did not come to national prominence until 1956 under the auspices of Sun Records of Memphis, Tennessee, the company which had launched Elvis Presley's career …

Unable to fit comfortably into the conventional Memphis rockabilly mould, in which young white singers such as Presley and Jerry Lee Lewis took their inspiration from the rhythm and blues idiom of their black neighbours, Orbison moved across the state to Nashville and concentrated on developing a more original style, closer in tone to country music. In 1958, the Everly Brothers' recording of one of his compositions *Claudette*, dedicated to his first wife, became a hit.

In 1960 his own recording career took off, with his second release for the Monument label. *Only The Lonely* set a lasting pattern; its gaunt, deliberate mood contrasted strongly with the prevailing patterns of white pop music, which by that time mostly divided into frantic rockers and drippy high-school ballads.

In that first hit, as in *Blue Angel*, *Running Scared* and *In Dreams*, Orbison expressed teenage emotions with a rare dignity. *Oh Pretty Woman*, which topped the charts in 1964, found him stepping outside his normal character into a more cheerful mood.

Orbison toured widely during the early Sixties, often sharing a bill with the Beatles. In 1966, though, Claudette Orbison died in a motorcycle accident while they were on their way home from a drag-race meeting. They had just remarried, after a brief divorce. Two years later, while Orbison was on tour in Britain, two of his three sons were killed in a fire which destroyed his Tennessee lakeside ranch.

In the late Sixties he was largely forgotten. Not until the emerging Bruce Springsteen paid a prominent tribute in 1975, in the opening lines of a song called *Thunder Road*, did he re-enter the collective consciousness …

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Turn from the wayward passions of youth and pursue justice, integrity, love and peace together with all who worship the Lord in singleness of mind. 2 Timothy 2 : 22

BIRTHS

AHRONSON - On December 5th at the John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford, to Sofia (née Franz) and Timothy, a daughter, Katherine Alice.

ARBUTHNOTT - On November 30th at Hinchingbrooke Hospital, to Victoria (née Mansell) and Brian, a beautiful daughter, Sophie Elisabeth, a sister for James.

BARKER - On November 30th 1997 at the Matilda Hospital, Hong Kong, to Rosamund (née Clarke) and Robert, a daughter, Annabelle Margaret.

BISHOP - On December 4th, to Claire (née Dennis) and Andrew, a daughter, Katie, a sister to Lucy and William.

BOYS-STONES - On 5th December 1997 at Hexham General Hospital, to Dawn and Francis, a son, Claude Francis, a brother for Poppy.

BURTON - On 30th November 1997, to Sandy (née Rowsell) and Oliver, a son, Julius William Andrew, a brother for Annabel.

FURBER - On December 3rd at Cheltenham General Hospital, to Jane (née Eddison) and Duncan, a wonderful son, George Alexander Duncan.

GOWERS - On October 19th, to Emily (née Thomas) and Timothy, a daughter, Madeline Margaret, a sister for John and Richard.

GREGORY - On 25th November at Huddersfield Royal Infirmary, to Jane (née Todd) and Tim, a daughter, Jessica Helen.

HUMPHREYS - On December 2nd, to Francesca (née Darvall) and Martin, a daughter, Saskia Genevieve Darvall, a sister for Imogen.

MACDONALD-BUCHANAN - On December 1st, to James and Julia, a son, Angus Anthony.

PASCHALI - On 4th December at St James's, Leeds, to Androula and Barry, a son, Christopher Andreas.

PERCY - On December 5th in Brussels, to Dominique (née de Bellefroid) and Tim, a daughter, Zephyr Leonora, a sister for Harry Merlin.

SALVIN - On December 5th 1997, to Georgina (née Bates) and Gerard, a son, Gerard Edward Henry 'Ned', a brother for Matilda.

SCHECKTER - On 4th December at The Portland Hospital, to Clare (née Fawkes) and Jody, a daughter, Ila Maxime, a bossy little sister for Toby and Tomas, Hugo and Freddie.

WALSH - On December 2nd at The Portland Hospital, to Bradley and Donna, a son, Barney Charles Peter.

RUBY ANNIVERSARIES

WALKER:WRIGHT - On 7th December 1957, at the Church of St. Philip and St. James, Clifton, York, Kenneth George Walker to Margaret Ellis Wright. Now at Wendover, Buckinghamshire.

DEATHS

BOWES - Dr. Charles Henry Gordon K.St.J. on 3rd December peacefully in hospital after a short illness, dearly loved husband of the late Brenda (née Todd), dearly loved brother of Leonora. Service to be held in St Cuthberts Church, Marton, Middlesbrough on Wednesday 10th December at 1.45 pm followed by cremation, to which all friends are respectfully invited. Family flowers only. Donations if desired to: The British Heart Foundation c/o Mr A.J. Barker, Penn Fields, Newton, Cleveland TS9 6QR.

CADWALLADER - Robin John, peacefully at home on 1st December 1997 aged 54 years. Funeral Service at 11.45 am on Friday 12th December at the United Reformed Church, St John's Hill, Sevenoaks. Family flowers only please. Donations if desired to Hospice in the Weald c/o Francis Chappell & Sons, 27 London Road, Sevenoaks, tel: (01732) 450203.

CONNER - William Louis Mountfort, died peacefully on December 3rd 1997, after a short illness. Much loved husband of Chérie, father of Patrick and Judi, and grandfather of Anna, Louis, Harriet, Jack and Toby. Funeral Service at 2 pm on Thursday 11th December at St Michael and All Angels, Bath Road, London W4.

COOKE - Margaret McEwan (née Preston) (BSc Hons) died 30th November 1997 aged 72. Daughter of the late Professor George Preston (St Andrews). She will be sadly missed by her son Don and daughter (MaryJane).

DAWSON - Christabel Maud aged 93 years, late of Dalby, peacefully in her sleep at the Old Hall Nursing Home, Halton Holegate, on 3rd December 1997. The funeral service and burial will take place at Dalby Church at 2pm on Wednesday 10th December. All flowers and enquiries to A. Smith & Son Funeral Directors, Raithby Hill, Hundleby, Spilsby, Lincs. PE23 5NH, tel: (01790) 752334 day or (01790) 753522 evenings.

EVERS - Joanna on December 4th peacefully at Pendean Nursing Home, Midhurst, in her 93rd year. Beloved wife of the late Jack and dear mother of Valentine and Juliet and granny to Andrew, Iona and Hugo. Funeral Service to be held at St John's Church, Bury on Friday 12th December at 2.30 pm.

GAFFIKIN - Nancy Mapleton peacefully on December 4th 1997 after an illness, beloved wife of the late Thomas Q. Gaffikin, loving sister of Wendy Nicholls and much loved aunt and great-aunt. Funeral to be held at St Paul's Church, Ramsey, Isle of Man at 1.30 pm Wednesday 10th December. Family flowers only please. Donations to Pets Aid League c/o Mrs Bird, 5 Larivane Close, Andreas, Isle of Man.

HARVEY - On November 27th Philip, much loved eldest son of the late Lord Harvey of Prestbury and Mrs Jacqueline Harvey. Funeral St Mary's Parish Church, Chigwell, Essex, Wednesday December 10th at 2 pm. All enquiries and flowers to J.H. Kenyon, (0171) 834-4624.

HIGNELL - Beth, beloved wife of the late Roly, mother of Ann and William, passed away peacefully at St Mary's Hospital, Bristol, on December 3rd. Private family cremation followed by Service of Thanksgiving at St Mary's Church, Thornbury, near Bristol, Wednesday December 17th at 3 pm. Donations for Cheshire Homes c/o R. Davies & Son, 381 Gloucester Road, Horfield, Bristol BS7 8TN.

JESSEL - Betty Lady on 2nd December 1997 aged 87 peacefully after long illness bravely endured. Private family funeral, followed by Memorial Service at St Mary's Church, Goudhurst at a date to be announced, no flowers by request. Donations, if desired, to National Garden Scheme, Kent Branch c/o E.R. Sills, Kenwood, High Street, Cranbrook, TN17 3DT, tel: (01580) 712284.

KAYE - Beverly Kay, much loved sister of Marilyn, died peacefully at home December 3rd after a short illness. Funeral Service at St Mary Magdalene, Richmond at 2 pm Tuesday. Private burial later in Magdalen Hill Cemetery, Winchester.

KIRTON - On December 5th peacefully in hospital of Plawsworth, Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham, Hugh Kirton T.D., D.L. and Knight of the Order of St John, in his 88th year, brother of the late Peggy, Robert and Mary and dear uncle to Isobel, Robert, Fenwick and their families. Friends please meet for service at Chester-le-Street Parish Church on Tuesday 9th December at 9.30 am, followed by cremation at Durham. Family flowers only. Donations in lieu to St John Ambulance c/o Skillion Business Centre, Durham Industrial Estate, Durham City, DH7 8HG.

MAGUIRE - Captain T.D. Royal Engineers of London, England passed peacefully at home in Sooke, British Columbia, Canada on November 29th 1997 in his 87th year. He is predeceased by his brother Michael and sister Peggy. He is lovingly remembered and sorely missed by his sons Christopher and Andrew and his sister Kathleen Walker of Grimsby, Ontario. Service was held at St Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Sooke, B.C. on Friday at 2.00pm.

MELLORS - Betty on 3rd December 1997, at Wimbledon Parkside Hospital. Greatly loved wife of Col. Wilfred Mellors, MBE, mother of Jennifer, Jane and Joanna, and grandmother of Ciaran. Private family service on Monday 8th December. Enquiries to F.W. Paine, 265 Ewell Road, Surbiton, Surrey.

OLIVER - Christopher Selwyn Farquharson. Died swiftly at the age of 71, after a long illness bravely borne and well-tended, in the Pilgrims' Hospice, Canterbury, on December 4th. Funeral at Barham Crematorium at 12 noon on Wednesday December 10th. Family flowers only to C.W. Lyons, Military Road. Donations in lieu to The Pilgrims' Hospice, Canterbury.

STAITE - Chris, beloved wife to Tony, died peacefully on 4th December. She knew that her Redeemer lives. Funeral Service at Farnham Baptist Church, 10th December 1pm. No flowers, gifts to Love Russia or Cancer Research.

STONES - Robert Charles, died peacefully at home on November 28th 1997, aged 80. Beloved husband for 56 years of Peggy and father of Alison, Rosemary and William. The funeral took place in France on 1st December 1997. Chaussnaud, Savignac-les-Eglises, France 24420.

STYLES - Gertrude Mary on 1st December 1997 at Arthur Clark Home, Reading, aged 91, wife of the late Frank Styles. Funeral Service at Reading Crematorium at 3.15 pm on Wednesday 10th December. Enquiries to Cyril H. Lovegrove Funeral Directors, Caversham, Reading, tel: (0118) 946 1393.

TATEM - Ken, much loved father of Zara and Rebe, will be very much missed by their families. Died suddenly 4th December 1997.

VERNON - Richard Evelyn died comfortably at home on December 4th with his long term carer at his side. Funeral Service on Friday December 12th at 12.30 pm Mortlake Crematorium. Flowers or donations to Parkinson's Disease Society may be sent to T.H. Sanders & Sons, tel: (0181) 876-4673.

IN MEMORIAM — PRIVATE

ASTON - Dr Simon Robert, geochemist with the UN, died aged 39 in Monaco December 1986. With gratitude and pride, we remember Simon who gave so much love and happiness during his life and left such treasured memories with all his family.

IN MEMORIAM — PRIVATE

BAGNALL - Georgina - today we remember your 25th Birthday and every day the love we shared.

HIRSHFIELD - Lord Desmond Barel Hirshfield May 17th 1913 - December 6th 1993. My darling husband will love and cherish your memories forever. Your very saddened wife Bronia. Will miss you forever.

TOMPKINS - Richard CBE in loving memory of my darling husband who passed away 5 years ago today. So many cherished memories, forever in my heart. Liz.

TOMPKINS - Richard CBE Daddy, you are forever in my thoughts and I miss you every day, but I know you are always sitting on my shoulder. Vicky.

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BIRTHDAYS

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DAVID William Buckley. Special Birthday Wishes on the 7th for a very special person. Carol

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THE VEN G. B. TIMMS

The Ven G. B. Timms, Archdeacon of Hackney, 1971-81, died on November 15 aged 87. He was born on October 4, 1910.

The Ven G. B. Timms was a Church of England priest in the English catholic tradition. He valued tradition, and advertised this by wearing an archdeacon's frock coat and gaiters on formal occasions at a time when most dignitaries had long since given them up. It was part of his style, as was the cigarette holder which he wore and wielded like Marlene Dietrich. But tradition for him was not an inhibiting constraint, rather a valued source from which to draw inspiration and guidance.

Timms was a good example of the scholarly parish priest who in the past has been so important in building up the life of the Church of England. He read and studied in order to provide the best in liturgy and hymnody, because he thought that only the best was good enough for the worship of God and also that only the best was good enough for the people of God.

There was a remarkable consistency in Timms's ministry. The things which he cared about and which led him into the ministry of the Church of England were what he taught in his parish ministry and, when opportunity arose, tried to communicate to the wider Church through his writings and addresses in the Church Assembly, General Synod and elsewhere. He made outstanding contributions to the revision of services for the *Alternative Service Book* and to hymnody by writing numerous hymns and chairing the editorial board for the *New English Hymnal*.

George Boorne Timms was born in Derby. His parents were devout Baptists and, as soon as he was old enough, he went with his half-sisters three times each Sunday to the church services and Sunday school. This was a walk of one and a half miles each day. He continued going regularly and was baptised when he was 15.

In later life he used to look back with gratitude for what he had learnt in that period of his life. He went on a scholarship to Derby School and was intending to become a schoolmaster. But, while he was in the sixth form, he became friendly with three boys who hoped to start training for ordination in the Church of England. He began going with them to services at their local Anglican church and became increasingly attracted to the beauty of the liturgy. Around the same time, the minister of his own Baptist church left to join the Church of England. Together these things persuaded Timms to seek confirmation.

In 1930 he went up to Oxford, to St Edmund Hall to read theology, and was fortunate to have Austin Farrer, one of the leading theologians of the mid-20th century, as his tutor. From there he proceeded to the College of the Resurrection at Mirfield for two years' ordination training followed by a two-year training curacy in a parish in Coventry.

In January 1938 he moved to a second curacy in a parish in Reading where he stayed for an unusually long period of 11 years. He was very happy there, finding "an exceptionally high standard of worship with an elaborate ceremonial, but on 'English' not 'Roman' lines," as he wrote later. It was there that he wrote his first small book. In 1945 Dom Gregory Dix of Nashdom Abbey had published his seminal work *The Shape of the Liturgy*. Timms took issue with him over his view of Archbishop Cranmer's beliefs. In *Dixit Cranmer: A Reply to Dom Gregory*, he defended Cranmer's theology and his liturgical compositions.

In 1949 Timms was appointed priest vicar and sacrist of Southwark Cathedral, which gave him valuable experience in ordering worship and ceremonial on great occasions. Three years later he was appointed vicar of St Mary's, Primrose Hill in Hampstead, which ever since Canon Percy Dearmer had been vicar there at the beginning of this century had been renowned for the beauty of its music and liturgical worship in the English catholic tradition.

There was much to be done in the parish following the disruption of war, but he managed to find time to be rural dean, a Proctor in Convocation (a member of the House of Clergy in the Church Assembly/General Synod) and a member of the Archbishop's Commission to revise the Catechism.

In 1965 Timms was appointed vicar of the Guild Church of St Andrew in the City and also Director of Ordination Training. When the London diocese was split into episcopal areas in 1971, ordination training became the responsibility of each of the area bishops. Timms stayed at St Andrew's, and was appointed Archdeacon of Hackney in the Stepney episcopal area.

As vicar of a Guild church with no Sunday services he was able to join in Sunday worship in all the churches in his care. But he was also composing collects for the 73 new entrants in the calendar of saints authorised in the *Alternative Service Book*, which were published in *Clouds of Witness* just after his retirement in 1981. He was working hard, too, on the *New English Hymnal*, which was published in 1986 and contains 14 of his own hymns. In his long life he greatly enriched the life and worship of the Church of England.

He was unmarried.

ANN LINDSELL

Ann Lindsell, motor neurone disease sufferer and campaigner for the legalisation of voluntary euthanasia, died on December 1 aged 47. She was born on April 28, 1950.

OF THE the six years she had motor neurone disease, Annie Lindsell spent the last two campaigning for the right of terminally ill patients to ask for and receive doctor-assisted help in dying. In a recent High Court case, she obtained the assurance that, at her request, her GP could legally administer palliative drugs which could have the effect of shortening her life.

This broke new ground in that she gained the court's approval for this treatment to be given at her own request and at a much earlier stage than is normal medical practice.

The daughter of a businessman and a nursing sister, she spent her childhood in Emerson Park, Hornchurch, excelling in modern languages and drama at the local grammar school while also training in singing and tap-dancing. Although she was never actually expelled, a clash of wills with the headmistress led her to leave school at 16 and to enrol at Thurrock College for A levels and a degree in French and German. However, boredom with a traditional career in technical translation led her to fulfil a childhood dream by joining BOAC as an air stewardess at the age of 21. Here she found that the rights of the female cabin crew were vastly different from the men's. Women could not marry and had to leave at the age of 28.

This led Lindsell into a parallel career as one of the first female trade union representatives in the airline industry during which, in 1970-71, she was instrumental in creating a closed shop cabin crew union and, in 1974, in bringing about the only 100 per cent walkout ever staged in the airline's history. Later, she was a key player in the implementation of the Equal Opportunities Act in the airline and was responsible for many of the rights enjoyed by stewardesses in today's British Airways.

Although often accused of being a feminist, Lindsell always denied this label, contending that her belief was simply that promotion should be related to ability rather than gender. One of the original Concorde team, in 1986 she was offered a promotion to management, a position which she turned down in favour of leaving the airline and rekindling her acting career at a drama school.

She was an accomplished singer, especially in the blues, and possessed a legendary ability to imitate accents which contributed to a varied career in acting and later as a cabaret artist in London and on the Edinburgh Fringe. Even after becoming wheelchair-bound, she continued to perform, both on stage and on television. Lindsell's final career was, however, as a management training consultant, starting in 1989 and continuing successfully until motor neurone disease was diagnosed in January 1992.

For the next four years, she was consumed with both finding a cure for herself, by traditional and alternative means, and fundraising. In June 1995, she helped to set up a new charity, the John Hill Foundation, in order to channel money more directly into research. At this time, she also began to express fears about the manner of her own death and was asked to give her views on physician-assisted dying at the AGM of the Voluntary Euthanasia Society.

Thus began a whirlwind of speaking engagements and media attention leading to her decision in the summer of 1996 to seek legal advice on possible court action. Wanting to phrase the case in terms of human rights, she was initially inclined to consider the European Court. However, the time this would involve led her, in October 1997, to take her individual case to the High Court in Britain. There she spoke of her relief at knowing that she would "not be compelled to live her last days in a state of indignity and extreme distress." Five weeks later she died peacefully from breathing problems associated with the disease.

Her partner, Ron Hicks, survives her.

JOHN ELWYN

John Elwyn, painter, died on November 13 aged 80. He was born on November 20, 1916.

JOHN ELWYN'S memories of childhood in a close-knit community of farmers, weavers and country craftsmen in the isolated heartland of Welsh-speaking south Cardiganshire sustained him through a long career as a painter in self-imposed exile in England. His paintings of the Nonconformist chapel community, its woollen mills, bustling farmyards and gentle rolling cattle pastures are a lasting testament to his undiminished love for the locality of his youth.

Like an 18th-century artist in search of the picturesque, he travelled to discover sensuous forms within a landscape of enclosed valleys, and recorded rural activities from seed time to harvesting. At times marginalised by the younger generation of abstract painters in Wales, Elwyn remained true to his vision.

William John Elwyn Davies was born at Emlyn Mill in the village of Adpar, near Newcastle Emlyn on the banks of the Teifi, where his father manufactured flannel for miners' shirts. He left Llandysul County Grammar School in 1935 to become the only painting student at Carmarthen School of Art, where the Principal, Sidney Morse-Brown, recognised his talent. He completed the final year of his training at the West of England Academy at Bristol and was awarded a Royal Exhibition in 1938 to study at the Royal College of Art. Here his facility for figure drawing attracted the attention of Gilbert Spencer, who said in a testimonial that Elwyn was the best student he had taught. Elwyn's studies were interrupted by the war, and in 1940 he faced a Conscientious Objectors' Tribunal and was directed to work on the land.

In 1948 he moved to Hampshire, where he taught at Portsmouth College of Art, and, "realising I knew more about myself than anything else," he began "to write stories in paint" illustrating childhood experiences.

These pictures of rural Cardiganshire in the 1920s — the holidays, festivals, and funerals associated with chapel-going — formed his first London exhibition, held at the Paul Alexander Gallery, Notting Hill.

Encouraged by the success of his first show, he began a new series about the miners and their landscape near Pontrhydyfen in the Afan Valley, where he lived when working in forestry during the war. "Gazing into a sulphurous sunset," he recalled, "and seeing the rows of small silhouetted figures of miners like insects with shadows and reflections scribbled on the wet roads making their way homewards to their tin baths in front of the kitchen fire, was a visual experience of the first order." The picturesque romanticism of the industrialised landscape was a rare departure from the concerns of mainstream British painting; few artists were recording the industrial landscape in 1951.

In 1953, Elwyn moved to Winchester, where he taught painting and illustration at the School of Art until his retirement in 1976. There his paintings were once more concerned with a peaceful vision of the working life of the countryside, from season to season and at different times of the day. His landscapes encapsulate an attitude towards life in the country, and the virtue of working the land popularised in the 19th century. Through the 1950s and 1960s he exhibited in many places in England and Wales.

By 1960 Elwyn's compositions had become more economical and the formal passages were more predominant as he moved away from pure representation and clearly-recalled forms. These large canvases were shown in solo exhibitions at the Leicester Galleries in Cork Street in 1965 and 1969.

After ten years of near abstraction, however, he returned to direct representation of the Cardiganshire landscape — landscapes of the mind which have a place in reality and a strong sense of *genius loci*. They are romantic, too, in their intense statement of emotion and the dramatic representation of a breadth of poignant visual experiences. Many of Elwyn's themes developed from his reading of Anglo-Welsh literature, in particular that of his friends Glyn Jones, Leslie Norris and John Ormond.

Elwyn worked for time as a graphic designer for J. Walter Thompson in Berkeley Square. As an illustrator, he produced numerous books and dustwrappers, contributed to *Radio Times* from 1953, produced designs for the *Shell Guides to the Countryside*, and latterly illustrated a limited edition of Dafydd ap Gwilym's *Houses Of Leaves* for the Old Stile Press. He made lithographs with Edwin la Dell at the Royal College of Art, with Stanley Jones at Curwen, and was commissioned to produce a series of prints for the Collectors' Guild, New York, printed by the Curwen Press.

John Elwyn was a popular painter whose work sold consistently well. In his last year, he gained enormous pleasure from several accolades: a retrospective exhibition of 60 years of work at the National Library of Wales; a one-man show at the Martin Tinney Gallery, Cardiff; and an honorary DLitt from the University of Wales.

John Elwyn married Gillian Butterworth in 1970, and she survives him.

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LEGAL NOTICES

No 005358 of 1997
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
CHANCERY DIVISION
COMPANIES COURT
IN THE MATTER OF COLONIA BALTICA INSURANCE LIMITED
AND IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Order of the High Court of Justice Chancery Division dated 26 November 1997 confirming the reduction of the Share Premium Account of the above-named Company by the sum of £6,159,000 was registered by the Registrar of Companies on 3rd day of December 1997.
Dated this 6th day of December 1997
[illegible] Arnold Cooper
Solicitors
17 Bridewell Place
London
EC4V 6AD
Solicitors for the above-named Company

LEGAL NOTICES

NO 005150 of 1997
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
CHANCERY DIVISION
COMPANIES COURT
IN THE MATTER OF DWYER ESTATES plc
AND IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Petition was on 27 November 1997 presented to Her Majesty's High Court of Justice for (a) the sanctioning of a Scheme of Arrangement and (b) the confirmation of the reduction of the share capital of the Company from £26,578,318.25 to £16,843,477.25.

AND NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that the said Petition is directed to be heard before the Companies Court Judge at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London WC2A 2LL on Monday 15th December 1997.

ANY creditor or shareholder of the said Company desiring to oppose the making of an Order for the confirmation of the said reduction of share capital should appear at the time of hearing in person or by Counsel for that purpose.

A COPY of the said Petition will be furnished to any such person requiring the same by the undermentioned solicitors on payment of the regulated charge for the same.
DATED this 6th day of December 1997
Berwin Leighton
Adelaide House
London Bridge
London EC4R 9HA
Ref: JOWE/D338/497
Tel: 0171 623 3144
Fax: 0171 623 4416
Solicitors for the above-named Company

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
NO. 005811 of 1997
CHANCERY DIVISION
COMPANIES COURT
IN THE MATTER OF EPH LIMITED
and
IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985
NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Petition was on 19 November 1997 presented to Her Majesty's High Court of Justice for the confirmation of the reduction of capital of the above-named Company from £50,000,000 to £46,820,367

AND NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that the said Petition is directed to be heard before the Registrar of the Companies Court at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London WC2A 2LL on Wednesday the 17th day of December 1997

Any creditor or shareholder of the said Company desiring to oppose the making of an Order for the confirmation of the said reduction of capital should appear at the time of hearing in person or by Counsel for that purpose

A copy of the said Petition will be furnished to any such person requiring the same by the under-mentioned Solicitors on payment of the regulated charge for the same.
DATED: 6 December 1997
Messrs Freshfields
65 Fleet Street
London EC4Y 1HS
(Ref: DCup8/NB/EAJG)
Solicitors for the above-named Company

PUBLIC NOTICES

No. 005609 of 1997
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
CHANCERY DIVISION
COMPANIES COURT
IN THE MATTER OF HB TRANSPORT INVESTMENTS LIMITED
AND IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Order of the High Court of Justice (Chancery Division) dated Wednesday the 3rd day of December 1997 confirming the reduction of capital and cancellation of the Share Premium Account of the above-named Company was registered by the Registrar of Companies on 4 December 1997.
Dated this 4th day of December 1997.
SJ Berwin & CO
222 Grays Inn Road
London WC1X 8HB
Solicitors for the Company

TRUSTEE ACTS

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to s27 of the TRUSTEE Act, 1925 that any person having a CLAIM against or an INTEREST in the ESTATE of any of the deceased person's whose names, addresses and descriptions are set out below is hereby required to send particulars in writing of his claim or interest to the person or persons mentioned in relation to the deceased person concerned before the date specified; after which date the estate of the deceased will be distributed by the personal representatives among the persons entitled thereto having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

BOYD, HELEN MARGARET of 53 Clarence Gate Gardens, Glentworth Street, London NW1 (or 11 Northwick Close, London W8) died on 13 September 1997 particulars to COUTTS & CO, TRUSTEE DEPARTMENT of 440 STRAND, LONDON WC2R 0QS before 7 February 1998.

BRAWN Mrs. Betty Joan of The Hollies Nursing Home, Burghfield Common, Reading, died on 16th September 1997. Particulars to Sarjeant & Sheppard, Solicitor(s) of 150 Friar Street, Reading, RG1 1HE before 16th February 1998.

CRAWFORD WALTER JAMES of 3, The Crest, Emmer Green, Reading died on 2nd November 1997. Particulars to Sarjeant & Sheppard, Solicitor(s) of 150 Friar Street, Reading RG1 1HE before 16th February 1998.

WILLS, SIR ERNEST EDWARD DE WINTON of Mount Prosperous, Hungerford, Berkshire died on 20 August 1983 particulars to WITHERS Solicitors of 12 GOUGH SQUARE, LONDON EC4A 3DE (Ref: EJP/DLC) before 7 February 1998.

TRUSTEE ACTS

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to s27 of the TRUSTEE Act, 1925 that any person having a CLAIM against or an INTEREST in the ESTATE of any of the deceased person's whose names, addresses and descriptions are set out below is hereby required to send particulars in writing of his claim or interest to the person or persons mentioned in relation to the deceased person concerned before the date specified; after which date the estate of the deceased will be distributed by the personal representatives among the persons entitled thereto having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

CROSS, GERTRUDE GABRIELLE of 80a Ladbroke Road, London W11 died on 28 February 1997 particulars to VIZARDS Solicitors of 42 BEDFORD ROW, LONDON WC1R 4JL before 7 February 1998.

MARTIN Ada Louisa of 167 Reading Road, Wokingham, Berkshire died on 14th September 1997. Particulars to Sarjeant & Sheppard, Solicitor(s) of 150 Friar Street, Reading, RG1 1HE, Berkshire before 14th February 1997.

PARNSALU, ERIKA of 65 Craven Walk, London N16 died on 9 May 1997 particulars to DOWSE & CO Solicitors of 229/238 CAMDEN HIGH STREET, LONDON NW1 7BU before 7 February 1998

WEBB, Rose of The Cottage, 15 Cotswold Edge, Mickleton, Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire died on 19th May 1997. Particulars to Child & Child Solicitors of 9 Motcomb Street, London SW1X 8LB before 6th February 1998.

LEGAL, PUBLIC, COMPANY & PARLIAMENTARY NOTICES

TO PLACE NOTICES FOR THIS SECTION PLEASE TELEPHONE

0171-680 6878
OR
FAX: 0171 481 9313

Notices are subject to confirmation and should be received by 2.30pm two days prior to insertion.

MILESTONES

Stephane Grappelli, jazz musician, died on November 1 aged 89. He was born on January 26, 1908.

Stephane Grappelli played with many of the jazz greats: Duke, Fats, Glenn, Miles, Oscar and others. He was bought his first violin by his father when he was a child, and took a job as a cinema musician at the age of 14. Around 1927 he became a member — initially as a pianist — of a big band called the Gregorians. He then met the gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt and forged a remarkable partnership. With friends they formed a quintet which created a new form of subtle but fiery jazz. In London during the war, Grappelli worked the clubs with the pianist George Shearing, and with the return of peace, he was reunited with a rather wayward Reinhardt, until his death in 1953. A revival of interest in the jazz violin in the following decade enabled him to edge back towards the limelight, and in the 1970s he recorded a series of popular duets with Yehudi Menuhin. Never married, he continued to tour and record despite illness almost to the end of his life.

Obituary published on December 2.

Kathy Acker, author and performer, died on November 29. She is thought to have been born in 1944 or 1948.

Kathy Acker was an iconoclastic New Yorker who became a stripper on 42nd Street after college, and gravitated towards underground artists, writers and photographers. In Britain, fame and notoriety were heaped upon her in 1984 with the publication of *Blood and Guts in High School*. She saw herself as an heir of William Burroughs — refusing plot and writing obsessively about bodies and sex — and, as an embodiment of the deconstructive counter-culture, she was the subject of a *South Bank Show*. Her book *Pussy, King of the Pirates* was rejected by her British publishers as too graphic. She took instead to performing and recording parts of it with a punk band named the Mekons. Taken very seriously in the wilder reaches of academia, she was asked by the San Francisco Art Institute to launch a department of writing in 1990.

Obituary published on December 2.

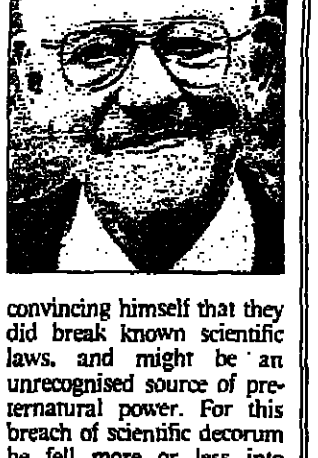
Big Daddy (Shirley Crabtree), wrestler, died on December 2 after a stroke aged 67. He was born on November 14, 1930.

Born in Halifax and named after his wrestling father — himself named after Charlotte Brontë's Shirley — the boy who became Big Daddy always wanted to be a wrestler. He appeared as Mr Universe and the Blond Adonis, but it was not until he adopted the name Big Daddy and took to a leotard and a glitzy cape that he broke through to showbiz acclaim. For more than a decade he featured in the ITV wrestling promoted by his brother, and although they were contrived pantomimes and there were accusations of fight-rigging, the shows made him famous. He did much charity work, especially with children.

Obituary published on December 3.

Eric Laithwaite, Emeritus Professor of Heavy Electrical Engineering at Imperial College, London, died on November 27 aged 76. He was born on June 14, 1921.

Eric Laithwaite designed the world's first magnetically levitating high-speed train, and persuaded the Government of the day to back it. A mile of track was built and a full-scale levitating locomotive tested, but soon abandoned. Laithwaite turned to writing books and became familiar on radio and television. Then he heard from an amateur inventor, Alex Jones, about a wheeled device which apparently broke Newton's Third Law of Motion — moving without any power to the wheels or any thrust. He became fascinated by gyroscopes, gradually convincing himself that they did break known scientific laws, and might be an unrecognised source of preternatural power. For this breach of scientific decorum he fell more or less into academic disgrace, retiring from Imperial College in 1981. "None of my critics could ever explain to me how a 50lb spinning wheel loses weight," he said. He spent his last years experimenting with a variety of gyroscopic rigs, and in 1993 applied for a patent on a gyroscopic spacedrive: typically, he had built the demonstration model out of his childhood Meccano set.



Obituary published on December 4.

Equities firm, gilts fall

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on *the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend.* Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
565	407½	Allied Domecq	553	+ 8½	4.4	14.2
626	385	Bulmer (HP)	413½		4.4	11.5
75½	40½	Burn Stewart	46½	- 2	9.1	16.2
1040	865	Glenmorangie A	950		1.8	22.8
638	425½	Grand Met	569½	+ 22½	3.3	18.3
639½	424	Guinness	572	+ 23	3.4	15.7
380	280	Highland Distil	307½		3.6	14.2
336	213	Matthew Clark	230½	- ½	13.0	6.9
109½	49½	Minydon W	65½	- 2	5.9	..
2009¾	1446¼	SA Breweries	1471⅛	+ 3¾	2.5	

BANKS

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
1521¼	918¾	ABN-AMRO	1240⅝	+ 37½	2.5	17.9
1050	710	Abbey Ntl	1010	+ 15	3.4	16.5
790	532½	Alliance & Leic	787	+ 14½	2.7	18.0
568	388½	Allied Irish	588	+ 4	3.0	16.7
516¼	363½	Aus New Z	428½	+ 17	4.7	.
4931¼	2875	Bank America†	4716⅝	+ 46¼		
585	291½	Bank Scotland	555	+ 13	2.0	15.4
1800	978½	Barclays	1546	+ 16	2.7	14.7
873½	517½	Bk of Ireland	873½	+ 6½	2.4	19.1
8959¾	6008¼	Citicorp	8343⅝	+ 450		
1759¾	1358¾	Commerzbk	1640⅝	+ 6¼	2.8	
862½	403¾	Dai Ichi Kan Y	443¾	+ 3¼	0.9	
4593¾	2709¾	Deutsche Bk	3931¼	+ 59¾	1.6	
1300	759¾	Espirito Santo	1178¾	+ 16¾	3.1	
947½	249	Fuji Bank Y	308½	+ 18	1.3	60.2
2389½	1272½	HSBC	1685	+ 13	3.4	13.7
2258½	1226	HSBC HK	1615	+ 17	3.6	13.1
783	507	Halifax	734	+ 9	2.5	24.7
645	483½	Irish Perm	635	+ 15	2.4	17.6
860½	424	Lloyds TSB	780	+ 28	2.4	22.1
1008	689½	Nat Aust Bk	832¼	+ 11¼	4.7	
1012½	663½	Nat West	940	+ 14½	4.0	14.8
515½	449	Northern Rock	515½	+ 10½	2.2	20.3
790	508	Royl Bk Scot	740	+ 20	3.7	14.2
1093½	592½	Standrd Chart	758	+ 8	2.6	13.2
£164¾	£164¾	Wells Fargo	£164¾		1.9	.
409¾	315½	Westpac	380½	+ 6	3.8	
373½	267½	Woolwich	309	- 3½	3.2	18.3

BREWERIES, PUBS & REST

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
929	695	Bass	921	+ 37½	3.8	18.3
68¼	43½	[illegible] for the Bar	54		4.2	11.4
205	132½	Burtonwood Brw	151½		5.9	13.2
156½	121½	City Centre Rest	132		2.4	30.5
744½	575½	Compass Gp	708½	+ 6	1.6	26.0
305	250	Eldridge P 'A'	290		2.7	
266½	221	Enterprise Inns	248½	+ 2½	3.9	
485	412	Fuller Sm 'A'	427½		2.9	14.9
595	310	Greenalls Gp	425	+ 9½	4.7	10.6
770	610	Greene King	676	+ 19½	3.1	13.7
237½	152½	Grosvenor Inns	200	+ ½	4.0	20.8
293½	218½	Groupe Chez Gert	281½		1.4	22.7
298½	213½	Hardy Hanson	219	+ 1	6.3	9.7
2850	2175	Holt J	2175		3.4	12.2
78	58½	Inn Business	58½		3.5	9.3
357	293	Mansfield†	297½		3.0	12.3
315½	252	Marston Thmp	270		3.7	9.4
615	480½	Morland	484		3.4	12.4
266½	210	Old Eng Pubs	266½		1.1	21.1
47½	18½	Paramount	20			
853	527½	PizzaExpress	830	- ½	0.5	47.4
437½	310	Ransome (H)	340	+ 2½	1.8	30.1
378½	262½	Regent Inns	332		1.2	26.8

BUILDING & CONSTRUCT

BUILDING MATERIALS

CHEMICALS

DISTRIBUTORS

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
680	530	Brammer	582½	+ 4	3.5	14.1
27	12½	Bridgend Gp†	13		1.8	59.4
119½	94½	Bell Fittings	95		5.9	7.6
360	300	Caffyns	349	+ 1	4.7	7.9
225	162½	Car Group	192½	- 1	3.1	
172½	117½	Cavendish†	135	+ 1½	3.5	7.8
100	61½	Charles Sidney	87		4.5	12.4
99½	42	Cook (DC)	43½	..	6.9	5.8
121	90½	Dag Motors	98		10.1	6.4
134½	102½	Dawsons B	105½	+ 2	3.3	9.7
400	215	Diplomat	222½		8.1	9.0
502½	367½	Electrocomponents	460	+ 19	2.2	24.7
229½	117½	Eurodis Elec	144½	+ 1	4.4	28.2
105	76½	European Mtr	94	+ 2	7.8	7.3
300	213	Evans Halshaw	280		7.1	..
55½	39½	Fife Indmar	47½	+ 2	8.9	7.8
307½	275	Finelist Grp	330		2.9	14.6
34½	19½	Gardiner	21½		5.5	7.9
79¼	57½	Glenchewton	85		3.0	10.8
110	82½	Gowrings	95½	+ ½	4.1	15.9
15¼	11	HR Owen	13		7.0	8.8
103	30½	Hamlet#	22½			2.1
374	284½	Headlam†	323½	- 1½	2.4	19.6
172	145	Holders Tech	152½	- 2½	5.3	12.5
240½	67½	ISA Intl	67½	- 7½	5.5	5.3
308½	200	Inchcape†	210½	...	5.8	13.9
72	49½	Jacks (Wm)	67½	...	5.4	7.4
343½	214½	Kwik-Fit	334½		2.2	18.3
460½	316½	Lex Service	445	+ 4½	4.6	13.4
122	97	Lookers	108½	...	9.1	7.8
9	5½	Middlesex	6		2.1	14.7
41½	10½	Midstatest	20		3.0	
472	180	Norbain	281	- 4	4.0	11.2
224½	114½	Northamber†	224	- ½	1.4	15.6
352¾	285½	Partco	305½	- 2½	3.3	16.3
394½	254½	Pendragon	282½	...	4.5	12.4
223½	172½	Perry Gp	180½	...	6.4	8.0
751	403½	Premier Farnell	418½	+ 1½	3.7	15.5
144½	116	Quicks Group	122½	...	7.7	8.1
357	305	REA	230		1.7	64.1
2½	1¼	Rance	1½			50.2
29	9½	Ronson	12			
4	1½	Ross Gp	3¼			
109½	78½	Ryland	103½		4.9	9.8
38	24	SEP Indl	27¾		7.0	12.8
62½	25	Salvre	30	- ½	5.0	.
415½	209½	Time Products†	211	..	7.3	8.7
347	164½	Trust Motor Grp	166	.	8.6	7.2
408	228	UMECO	395	...	1.8	21.0
93½	58	United Ossco Gp	85½		0.6	19.0
352½	267½	Vardy (Reg)	274	- 2	3.4	13.1
685	498½	WF Elect	640	..	2.9	22.0
41	25½	Walshawt	37½	+ ½	2.8	10.1
172½	111½	Wyko	148	.	2.5	16.4
159½	119½	Young (H)	156½	+ 4	3.8	

DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
492½	327½	Antofagasta	347½		1.9	17.8
328	232	Ascot Hldgs	254		2.6	11.1
917	532¾	Broken Hill	572¼	+ ½	3.6	15.4
288	175	BTR	182½	- 25½	6.0	6.3
624	462	BAT†	547	- 1	5.9	13.5
60½	41	Brierley Inv	43½	- ½	10.9	7.1
266	182	Cookson	212½	- 3½	4.7	13.4
240½	197½	Cosalt	230½		6.3	
415	256½	DCC†	380		2.6	14.2
330	243½	Gallaher	328	+ 3	7.3	10.2
140½	101½	Hanson CrsAdt	123½	+ 8½	8.9	13.8
667½	339½	Hutch Whamp	434½	- 10¼	2.7	26.5
436½	361	Imperial Tob	404½	+ 5½	6.9	9.6
522½	306½	Jardine Math	323	- 5½	4.7	12.6
158½	85½	Lonrho	89	- 1½	6.7	9.3
175½	141½	McLeod Russel	169		5.5	
482½	388½	Powell Duffryn	481½	+ 7	6.6	12.3

ELECTRICITY

ELECTRONIC & ELECT

ENGINEERING

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
1333½	897	Siebe	1247	+ 21	1.2	22.1
227½	105½	[illegible]	117½		5.3	8.3
993½	708½	Smiths Inds†	880	+ 30	2.5	20.7
767	547	Spirax-Sarco	547	- 2	3.2	14.2
303½	236½	Sterling Ind	246½		5.1	8.8
698½	450	TI	500	- 10	3.5	15.9
120½	88½	Tinsley (E)	102½	- 2	7.7	9.3
120½	92½	TransTec	97½		3.2	13.2
226	144½	Triplex Lloyd†	226	+ 10	4.0	15.3
378	251½	Ultra Elect	352½		2.3	20.6
77½	48½	Utd Inds	51		6.1	13.1
273½	160½	Vickers	243	+ 1	3.7	15.1
10½	6¼	Villers Gp	7½			

ENGINEERING, VEHICLES

FOOD MANUFACTURERS

HEALTHCARE

HOUSEHOLD GOODS

INSURANCE

INVESTMENT TRUSTS

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
512½	420½	Electra Inv	503½	+ 3	2.2	47.1
167¾	143	Eng & Scot	150¼	+ 1	2.4	41.4
422	307½	European Assel	372	+ 2	1.3	
113½	52	Fidity Asian Val	60	+ 1		
293½	216½	Fidity Euro Val	274½	+ 2	0.2	.
50	26	Fidity Jap Val	26¼	...		
138½	119½	Fidity Spec Valt	136½		1.2	68.2
232½	205½	Finsbury 'A'	225		2.2	61.3
191½	146½	Finsbury Gwth†	167½	+ 3½	2.6	47.0
214	157½	Five Arr Chile	161¼	+ 1¼	1.5	..
31½	11½	Five Arr Wts	11½	- ¼		
574½	379½	Fleming Amer	561	- ½	0.6	
82½	53	Fleming Asian	59	+ ½		

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
47	25¼	INVESCO Tokyo	35½			
165½	94½	JF Fledg Jap	95¼	- ¼		
120½	82½	J Fry Euro U	120½	+ 2½	5.8	25.2
72	42	J Fry Util	68	+ 2	7.6	16.0
79½	68½	J Fry Util Inc	79½			
117¾	92½	Jupiter Ex Inct	118	+ ½	8.5	14.7
16¼	3½	Jupiter Ex IncWt	12½			
91	76½	Jupiter Gbl Capt	90	+ 1	11.2	11.1
42¼	31	Jupiter Gbl Pld	42¼			
139½	130½	Jupiter Inl Gro	137	+ 2	3.6	..
399¾	293	Kiwl Chil	359	+ 4½	2.1	53.5
118½	84½	Kiwl E Mkt	90	...		
174	153½	Kiwl End	170	+ ½	...	
112½	74	Kiwl H Inct	105½	+ ½	12.8	10.7
368½	261	Kiwl O'seas	340½	- ½	1.5	66.0
188½	161½	Kiwl Smlr	176½		2.5	47.2
387	102½	Korea—Euro	104	+ 1	1.2	47.9
173¼	98¼	Latin American	123¾	+ 2¼		
1138	902½	Law Debenture	1071½	+ 17	3.2	32.5
122	103½	Lde Ofl Opp	117			
133	109½	Lloyds Sm Cap	127	+ 2		
25½	16½	Lloyds Sm Div	18¾	.	38.1	4.6
158½	128	Lloyds Sm Pkg	145½	+ ½	3.6	
179½	159½	Lon Sl Lawrence	172½		4.6	26.7
342	282½	Lowland†	342	+ 6½	4.2	29.3
800	635	M&G 2nd Dual Cp	785	+ 12½		
85	64½	M&G 2nd Dual In	70			2.3
73	56	M&G Inc Gearedt	72½	+ 1	9.9	13.0
49¼	31¼	M&G Inc Inv Tst Cp	49¼	+ ½		
32¼	20½	M&G Inc Inv Tst Inc†	23			3.7
150½	128	M&G Inc Package†	147	+ ½	4.9	28.4
78	71¼	M&G Inc Zero Div	76¼			
31¼	19¼	M&G Rec Cap	31¼	+ ¼		
53½	40½	M&G Rec Gearedt	50¼	+ 1¼	13.3	9.7

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
4250	3150	Murray S/C Uts	4250	+ 100	3.6	.
502	339½	Murray Smllt	363	+ 1½	2.1	46.7
415	386	Murray Vent	400½	+ ½	4.7	34.2
5½	5½	Newmarket	5½			
488½	353½	O'seas Inv Tst†	433	+ 2½	1.2	
251	150½	O'seas Wts	237½	+ 2½		
128	48½	Pacific Assets	56½		0.9	..
87	65½	Perpetual Euro	78¼	+ ½	0.7	
127½	98	Perp Inc Gilt	122½	+ 2	4.0	36.6
56	30	Perpetual Jap	50½	- ½		
386½	292½	Perps UK Sm Co	324½	+ ½	3.7	28.0
£177½	£126½	Personal Assets	£166½	+ 50	1.6	
137½	113½	Prolific Inc	132½	+ ¼	4.0	28.4

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
99½	69½	Mercury World	81½	+ ½	2.3	51.6
14	0½	Mercury Wld Wts	0¼			
765	603	Monks Inv Tst	702	+ 10	1.7	58.6
185½	158½	Morg Gren Inct	182½	+ 2½	4.7	25.6
79½	59½	Morg Wts	78	+ 2		
100½	68½	Morg Lat Amer	82	+ 1½	0.5	.
40½	20½	Morg Wts	28½	+ ½		
130½	115½	Murray Ent	117½	..	3.4	.
21½	12½	Murray Ent Wts	14½			
88	58½	Murray Emg Eco	62½	+ ½	1.1	.
21½	6½	Murray Em Ec Wt	10			
449	364	Murray Income	434	+ 5	4.1	31.1
501	401½	Murray Intl	444½	+ 1½	3.8	30.8
205½	192½	Murray S/C DP	205¼			
281½	163½	Murray S/C Cap	260	+ 1		
73½	57½	Murray S/C Inct	61½	..	24.4	4.9

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LEISURE & HOTELS

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
433½	333	[illegible] & Cop	380		2.2	16.2
1½	1	Millwall Hldgs	1½	...		
144½	94½	Newcastle Utdt	95½		2.1	13.9
378½	191½	Northern	375	+ 11½	2.0	28.2
188½	75½	Pham Leisure	76½	.	11.7	3.8
38	22½	Queensborough†	24		2.1	18.3
18½	10½	Queens Moat	12½	+ ¼		9.5
458½	278	Rank Grp	350	+ 4½	6.2	21.7
57½	40½	Ryan Hotels IE	51½	...	4.2	10.8
1600	1175	Savoy Hotel 'A'	1195		1.8	..
111½	39½	Sheffield United	51½	- 1		
267½	184½	Sinclair (Wm)	223½	+ 6	4.9	11.8
153½	47	Southampton	77½		1.8	.
110½	94½	Stakis	98½	- 1½	3.2	14.8
320	235½	Stanley Leisure	256	+ 1	2.0	20.8
11	4½	Tandem	5			60.3
346	346	Tanjong	346		0.9	34.8
210	120½	Thistle Hotels	158		2.9	14.7
142	78½	Tottenham Hot	78½		1.6	10.7
132	94	Vardon	128½	- 3½	2.2	15.2
411	270½	Wembley	271½	- 1	1.4	63.6
133½	89½	Zetters Gp	129½	+ 1	10.6	7.9

MEDIA

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
386½	303½	Abbott Mead	331½	- 1½	2.2	25.9
182½	102½	Adscene	137½		7.7	14.9
67½	55½	Aegis Gp	64	+ ½	1.0	18.0
201	100	Aspen Gp	100	..	7.6	

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
	447½	Capital Radiot	508	- 10	3.4	15.5
577½	444½	Carlton Comm	472	- 3	3.3	13.4
812½	512½	Chrysalis	571½		0.6	
95½	68	City of Lon	84½		8.7	18.7
140	97½	Cordiant	117½		1.1	19.4
174	134½	Creative Pub	137½		6.4	14.0
1968¾	1431¼	Daily Mail	1875		1.5	32.2
1868¾	1331¼	Daily Mail 'A'	1787½	+ 3½	1.5	30.7
216½	159½	Dialog	174½			
430	200	Dorling Kind	200	- 2½	2.8	33.1
908	715½	EMAP†	888½	- 3	1.9	20.9
705	440	EMI	473	- 2	3.5	64.9
1122½	841½	Elsevier	1014	- 7	2.5	23.4
1840	1400	Euromoney Pb	1627½	+ 5	4.0	17.6
49	37	Fitch	48	+ 1	1.6	11.9
803½	502½	Flextech	564½	+ 5½	...	...

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
232½	187½	BGT Group	191½	.	4.0	..
232½	167½	GWR Gp	174	...	2.0	32.7
392½	285¼	[illegible] Group†	345	- 2½	2.4	13.2
37½	24½	Goodhead	31½	+ 1½	1.8	16.3
345	254	HIT Entert	287½	..	0.2	42.7
287½	207½	Haynes Pub	265	..	5.0	11.8
22½	8½	Highbury Hse	9¼	- ¼	..	...
230	180	Hodder H'line	206		4.1	14.1
285	231	Henn Counts	240	..	3.0	23.3
415½	295	IBC	402	...	3.0	14.0
26½	18½	Incepta	20	- ½	..	12.0
497½	297½	Independent	342½	.	2.4	23.5
145	95	Intereuropa	129½	. ½	4.8	9.1
229½	172½	Johnston Press	210	+ ½	1.6	19.3

MINING

OIL & GAS

OTHER FINANCIAL

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
330½	429½	Liberty Int	509½	+ 7	4.2	36.8
493½	299½	Lon Forfaiting	391½	+ 11	3.9	12.8
229½	184	London Pacific	184	- ½	9.5	5.5
111½	85½	Lon Scot Bk	100		3.6	16.5
236½	170½	Man ED & F†	232	+ 1½	5.8	9.3
1457½	1097½	M & G	1360	+ 15	3.7	21.8
1710	1172½	MAM†	1675	+ 2	3.5	25.6
205½	113½	Paragon	204		1.7	.
2825	2156	Perpetual	2515	+ 25	3.1	16.7
741	500	Provident	741	+ 3½	3.0	23.6
400	303	Rathbone Bs	387½	+ ½	4.0	13.7
60½	39½	Rea Brothers	55	..	2.2	19.3
64½	48½	Rutland Tst	50	- ¼	3.6	11.6
157½	81	SEC Group	88		7.5	
445	302	S & U	323		7.2	8.5
2045	1370	Schroders	1900	+ 10	1.4	19.6
1820	1225	Schroders N/V	1745	- 15	1.5	18.0
635	522½	Secure Tst	615		4.3	13.4
162½	127½	Singer & Fried	143½	+ ½	4.3	11.3
47½	29½	Towry Law	47½	+ 2½	...	.
4¼	1¼	Tnd Hldgs	4¼	.		
106½	65	Union	80½			.
54	20¾	Versailles Gp†	46		1.2	27.7
397½	310	Winterst	360	..	4.8	16.1

PHARMACEUTICALS

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
285	98	Brit Biotech	107½	- 11	.	
1115	610	Cantab Pharms	712½			
673	247½	Celltech	265	+ 2½		...
443½	235½	Chiroscience	253½			
297½	137½	Cortecs	189½	- 7		
1441	885½	Glaxo Wellc	1405	+ 21	2.9	28.9
245	133½	ML Laboratories	137½	+ 3½		25.5
330½	197	Medeva	202	- 1	2.9	9.8
403	228½	Peptide Thera	274		..	
202½	177½	Powderject	191½	+ 1		...
92	24½	Proteus Intl	39	+ ½		
84	58	Ransom (Wm)	74	+ 2	4.3	15.3
737½	262½	Scotia	422½	..		
287½	216	Shire Pharms	270	- 1½		
95	46	SkyePharma	49	- ½		
646½	384½	SmithKline†	634	+ 19	1.7	31.6

PRINTING & PAPER

PROPERTY

RETAILERS, FOOD

RETAILERS, GENERAL

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
187½	157½	Partners	161½	+ 1		31.2
82½	67½	Partridge Fine	82		5.0	14.8
40½	26	OS Hldgs	28½			
337½	256½	Rosebys	314		3.5	16.6
142½	50½	Savo Group†	99½		8.9	7.5
96½	48½	Sears	48½	- ½	9.6	36.8
36½	26½	Signet Group	30			0.6
484½	333½	Smith WH	395½	+ 2½	4.9	
1220	910	Sotheby's†	1010		2.4	
305½	184	Signhouse†	244½	+ ½	4.3	12.1
150	77	Stylo	86½		6.7	
202½	152½	T & S Stores	190	+ 7	5.3	10.6
288½	135	Thorn	152	+ 1	11.2	8.2
203½	123½	Tie Rack	130	+ ½	3.2	13.0
340	205½	UNO	278	- 1	2.0	20.6
4	2½	Upton & South	3½			17.6
543½	324½	Vendome	471½	+ 3	2.8	17.5
26	3½	WEW Group	4¼	.		3.5
417½	132½	Wickes	236			4.6
313½	232½	Wyevale	273½	..	3.0	18.2

SUPPORT SERVICES

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
525	386	AEA Tech	480	- 3	3.3	22.7
180½	142	Aggreko	164		2.7	23.0
114	72	Alpha Airpts	82	+ ½	8.1	7.8

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

TEXTILES & APPAREL

TRANSPORT

WATER

ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
159½	84½	Abacus Recruit	157½	- 2	1.2	19.2
217	170	Cala Invst	208		1.8	15.8
262½	180	Dawson Hlgs	230	...	2.7	21.2
51¼	27½	Freepages	27½	- 1	.	.
98½	66	Megalomedia	66	- 2	0.4	31.3
65	22½	Memory Corp	31			
580	280	Prism Rail	391	+ 1	1.6	...
1285	732½	Railtrack Eq	862½	+ 62½	0.1	.
783	619½	Southern News	736½	...	3.4	
80½	65½	Southern Vectis	80½	.	3.3	16.7
60½	17½	Toucadent	19½	.	.	

Source: FT Information

Price at suspension; † Ex dividend; ‡ Ex scrip; ▲ Ex rights issue; ▼ Ex all; § Ex capital distribution; * Figures or report awaited; .. No significant data. Companies in bold are constituents of the FTSE 100 Index.

BRITISH FUNDS

SHORTS (under 5 years)

1997 High	Low	Stock	Price £	+/-	Int yld %	Grs red yld
116⅝	113⁵⁄₁₆	Treas 4⅛% 1998	116⅝		3.98	6.59
103⅛	100⅞	Exch 9¾% 1998	103⅞	- ⅛	8.73	7.20
101⅝	100	Treas 7¼% 1998	100	...	7.25	7.31
110⅛	102⅝	Treas 14% 1996-01	102⅝	- ⅛	13.60	7.34
114⅝	106⅝	Treas 15½% 1998	106⅝	- ⅛	14.58	7.34
108⅝	104⅛	Exch 12% 1998	104⅛	- ⅛	11.51	7.28
105⅝	102⅛	Treas 9½% 1999	102⅝	- ⅛	9.29	7.26
111⅞	106⅛	Exch 12¼% 1999	106⅝	- ⅛	11.54	7.21
109⅝	104⅛	Treas 10½% 1999	104⅝	- ⅛	10.05	7.19
99⅝	96⅝	Treas 6% 1999	98⅝	- ⅛	6.10	7.04
109⅝	105⅝	Conv 10¼% 1999	105⅝	- ⅛	9.70	7.12
108⅝	103⅝	Conv 9% 2000	103⅝	- ⅛	8.66	7.04
104⅝	102⅝	Treas 8% 2000	102⅝	- ⅛	7.78	6.94
104⅝	102⅝	Treas 8½% 2000	102⅝	- ⅛	8.27	7.08
119⅝	113⅝	Treas 13% 2000	113⅝	- ⅛	11.43	7.00
112⅝	98⅝	Treas 10% 2001	108⅝	- ⅛	9.22	6.99
101⅝	98⅝	Treas 7% 2001	100⅝	- ⅛	6.97	6.87

MEDIUMS (5 to 15 years)

1997 High	Low	Stock	Price £	+/-	Int yld %	Grs red yld
102⅝	97⅝	Treas 7% 2002	100⅝	- ⅛	6.94	6.99
122¼	109¼	Treas 9¾% 2002	111⅝	- ⅛	8.75	6.85
107⅝	102⅝	Treas 8% 2003	105¾	- ⅛	7.56	6.73
117¾	111½	Treas 10% 2003	115¼	- ⅛	8.68	6.74
116⅝	112⅝	Treas 11½% 2001-04	112⅝	- ⅛	10.18	6.97
90⅝	82⅝	Fund 3½% 1999-04	89⅝	- ⅛	3.93	5.49
118⅝	109⅝	Conv 9½% 2004	115⅝	- ⅛	8.24	6.68
102⅝	94⅝	Treas 6¾% 2004	100⅝	- ⅛	6.71	6.64
114¼	104⅝	Treas 8½% 2005	111½	- ⅛	7.62	6.82
122⅝	110⅝	Conv 9½% 2005	116⅝	- ⅛	8.18	6.82
130⅝	124⅝	Treas 12½% 2003-05	127⅝	- ⅛	9.78	6.75
108⅝	98⅝	Treas 7½% 2006	106⅝	- ⅛	7.07	6.59
110⅝	99⅝	Treas 7¾% 2006	107⅝	- ⅛	7.21	6.62
105⅝	100⅝	Treas 8% 2002-06	104¼	- ⅛	7.88	6.87
123⅝	115⅝	Treas 11¾% 2003-07	120⅝	- ⅛	9.72	6.81
116¼	105⅝	Treas 8½% 2007	113⅝	- ⅛	7.50	6.60
107½	96⅝	Treas 7¼% 2007	105⅝	- ⅛	6.89	6.52
121¼	108⅝	Treas 9% 2008	119⅝	- ⅛	7.54	6.49
114¼	101	Treas 8% 2009	112	- ⅛	7.14	6.52
99⅝	86¼	Treas 6¼% 2010	97⅝	- ⅛	6.42	6.56
124⅝	109½	Conv 9% 2011	121⅝	- ⅛	7.39	6.55
125⅝	109¼	Treas 9% 2012	122¾	- ⅛	7.34	6.56
93¼	80⅝	Treas 5½% 2008-12	91⅝	- ⅛	6.02	6.44
112⅝	98⅝	Treas 7¾% 2012-15	110⅝	- ⅛	7.02	6.62

LONGS (over 15 years)

1997 High	Low	Stock	Price £	+/-	Int yld %	Grs red yld
116⅝	100⅝	Treas 8% 2013	114	- ⅛	7.02	6.55
118⅝	101⅝	Treas 8% 2015	115⅝	- ⅛	6.91	6.49
126⅝	103⅝	Treas 8¾% 2017	124⅝	- ⅛	7.03	6.52
121⅝	101⅝	Tr 8% 2021	118½	- 1⅛	6.75	6.45

UNDATED

1997 High	Low	Stock	Price £	+/-	Int yld %	Grs red yld
54¾	43⅝	War Ln 3½%	53½	- ⅛	6.64	.
38¼	30⅝	Treas 2½%	37¼	- ⅛	6.69	
59⅝	49⅝	Consols 4%	59⅝	- ⅛	6.79	

INDEX-LINKED on projected inflation of:

1997 High	Low	Stock	Price £	+/-	5%	3%
193⅝	184⅝	Treas IL 2½% 2001	193⅝	- ⅛	3.20	3.49
191⅝	180⅝	Treas IL 2½% 2003	190⅝	- ⅛	3.17	3.37
123⅝	117⅝	Treas IL 4⅝% 2004	123⅝	- ⅛	3.13	3.38
204⅝	190	Treas IL 2% 2006	204¼	- ⅛	3.15	3.28
188⅝	170⅝	Treas IL 2½% 2009	185⅝	- ⅛	3.11	3.21
194⅝	178⅝	Treas IL 2½% 2011	194⅝	- ⅛	3.11	3.20
162	144⅝	Treas IL 2½% 2013	161⅝	- ⅛	3.10	3.18
175⅝	153⅝	Treas IL 2½% 2016	174½	- ⅛	3.09	3.17
169⅝	147⅝	Treas IL 2½% 2020	168⅝	- ⅛	3.11	3.17
142⅝	122⅝	Treas IL 2½% 2024	141⅝	- ⅛	3.10	3.16
140	119⅝	Treas IL 4⅛% 2030	139⅝	- ⅛	3.09	3.15

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COAL KING 30
Budge proves a tough nut to crack

BUSINESS

WEEKEND MONEY
SECTION 2 PAGES 51-64

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

SATURDAY DECEMBER 6 1997

Property sale may force BG to cut gas bills

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

BG may be forced to cut household gas bills by an additional £14 after the company admitted it hoped to get £800 million for property which it told the Monopolies and Mergers Commission was worth nothing.

Ofgas is to confront BG over the cash in a new twist to the acrimonious battle between the two over pricing curbs on Transco, the gas pipeline network owned by BG. Ofgas is to say that up to half of the proceeds from the sales should go back to customers.

The industry watchdog said: "This is big money that should mean a small cut in bills for a year." Ofgas is to say that the company, with whom it settled a two-year fight over Transco's prices in October, should put half of the profits of the sales back into Transco to fund price cuts to customers. With its third-quarter figures last month BG told *The Times* that the property sales would go to boost its exploration activities.

BG's property portfolio includes more than 1,000 sites. It has environmental commitments that are likely to cost about £350 million, according to Philip Hampton, the finance director. But he said the proceeds from the sales would go into exploration and production.

During its inquiry into the row between the company and the regulator over the Transco pricing plan BG told the MMC that it would rationalise its property portfolio. But it said it "did not expect to make an overall profit for such a rationalisation".

Ofgas, which has no jurisdiction over BG's non-regulated activities, is incensed that BG had told the MMC its property portfolio was worthless and is now expecting to pump profits into exploration and production. It said that if all of the £800 million BG quoted was booked as profit then £400 million should go to the Transco half of the business and then straight back to customers in one-off price cuts.

If its liabilities have to come off the £800 million then it wants the company to take the same action. At the higher end of estimates that will lead to £14 off a domestic bill; at the lower end it will mean a cut of £7.

The action by Ofgas will reopen a fresh clash between the two sides. The bitter row over Transco's pricing proposals prompted the company to declare the actions of the regulator to be "the biggest smash and grab raid" in corporate history. But the company has toned down its language and image under the control of David Varney, the chief executive. He has taken over from Dick Giordano, who stepped aside to become the non-executive, part-time chairman when British Gas demerged earlier this year. But exploration is key to BG's development and the company is unlikely to want to divert a substantial cash injection into the operation.

BG, which told the MMC it had clean-up obligations of £421 million as opposed to the £350 million quoted by Mr Hampton, said it may have to pay about £400 million extra in developing the land for sale. However, it has made no provision for such an expense.

The company said: "Nobody knows exactly how much this property is worth. Its value is dependent on the property market, which is unpredictable. As of the end of 1996, BG had provisions totalling £400 million for the statutory decontamination of land. We may have to spend that much again on additional work for the land to be developed."

BG has already started selling key sites such as a 32-acre site in Chelsea Harbour, west London, for between £25 to £30 million to Berkeley Group. Berkeley is planning a £100 million residential and commercial development.

Commentary, page 29

Varney: image control

FERGUS WILKIE

Holding all the aces: Alan Goodenough announced a breakthrough for LCI in Las Vegas

LCI places bets in Las Vegas

BY DOMINIC WALSH

LONDON Clubs International, the casino operator, moved a step closer to becoming the first British company to enter the world's most famous gaming market after securing a stake in a significant development in Las Vegas.

A year after signing a letter of intent, LCI announced yesterday that it has signed a conditional deal to pay $50 million (£30 million) for a 25 per cent stake in Aladdin Gaming, the company behind a planned redevelopment of the Aladdin Hotel and Casino on the 'Strip'.

When the complex opens in 2000 it will have 2,600 bedrooms with around 2,800 slot machines and 90 gaming tables. LCI's stake will also give it a share of profits in an adjacent scheme for a Planet Hollywood hotel and casino.

Alan Goodenough, chief executive of LCI, said: "We think the Aladdin project is a massive break for this company."

The news came as LCI suffered a drop in half-year pre-tax profits from £19.9 million to £14.4 million as high-rollers at the Ritz club and Rendezvous enjoyed a lucky streak. However, the situation since "had totally corrected itself", and trading in the first eight months of the current year was now ahead of last year. Earnings per share reached 6.9p (8.9p) and the interim dividend, to be paid on January 30, stays at 2.625p.

Tempus, page 31

Fifth profits warning from BTR knocks 12% off shares

BY ADAM JONES

BTR shares fell more than 12 per cent yesterday after the conglomerate issued its fifth profits warning since September 1994.

BTR said that economic difficulties in Asia and South America were hitting automotive sales in the second half of its financial year.

Combined with the early disposal of businesses in its restructuring programme, plus further pain from the strength of sterling, the emerging markets problems will leave second-half profits "more or less" at their restated first-half level of £565 million.

Ian Strachan, BTR chief executive, said: "This is expected to carry over into 1998." The shares closed at 182½p, down from 208p. He said BTR had sales of about £900 million in emerging markets such as Brazil, China, Korea and Malaysia last year, with about £300 million coming from South America.

He said the automobile market in Brazil had been severely hurt by a sudden doubling in interest rates. The majority of cars in Brazil are bought using consumer credit.

The financial instability in the Far East and South-East Asia has also hit BTR automotive exports, such as axles, from Australia to Korea and Indonesia. BTR said both Brazil and Australia's automotive divisions' full-year contributions will be significantly down on 1996. Nylex Malaysia, the specialist engineer supplying switchgear to Malaysia and South-East Asia, has also been hit by the region's economic slowdown.

BTR recently announced the disposal of the bulk of its polymers products division in a £515 million management buyout. It said the disposal was ahead of schedule.

Mr Strachan said the pound had strengthened since BTR's interim results were announced in September, when its was estimated that profits would be cut by £30 million on translation from foreign currencies in the second half. This estimated figure was increased yesterday to £32 million.

The strength of the pound is also damaging BTR's ability to compete with other exporters and domestic producers overseas. This transactional currency effect will be higher in the second half than in the first, when it was about £11 million. Mr Strachan would not estimate how much the increase would be.

BTR also announced yesterday that it is to be reclassified from January 1998 as an engineering company in the London share lists, after a decision by the FTSE Actuaries Industry Classification Committee this week.

Tempus, page 31

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	5142.9	(+60.6)
Yield	3.17%	
FTSE All share	2409.33	(−24.28)
Nikkei	16424.48	(+117.69)
New York:		
Dow Jones	8131.48	(+81.32)*
S&P Composite	981.79	(+8.69)*

US RATE

Federal Funds	5[illegible]%*	(5½%)
Long Bond	100[illegible]*	(110[illegible])
Yield	6.10%*	(6.05%)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth Interbank	7[illegible]%	(7[illegible]%)
Liffe long gilt future (Mar)	119[illegible]	(120[illegible])

STERLING

New York:		
$	1.6593*	(1.6663)
London:		
$	1.6568	(1.6757)
DM	2.9538	(2.9665)
FFr	9.8843	(9.9296)
SFr	2.3850	(2.3990)
Yen	215.58	(216.78)
£ Index	104.3	(104.9)

DOLLAR

London:		
DM	1.7825*	(1.7710)
FFr	5.9660*	(5.9275)
SFr	1.4390*	(1.4320)
Yen	130.10*	(129.40)
$ Index	108.4	(107.1)

Tokyo close Yen 129.27

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Feb)	$18.25	($18.10)

GOLD

London close	$297.85	($288.55)

* denotes midday trading price

Bristol & West claims first place in Isa race

BRISTOL & WEST is claiming to have launched the first in a new range of savings products linked to the Individual Savings Account — Isa — unveiled by the Treasury this week (Marianne Curphey writes).

The product was conceived in just three days after the Treasury's announcement on Tuesday and is on offer 16 months ahead of Isa's introduction in April 1999. Financial services providers are keen to share in the new Isa market.

The Bristol & West account can be opened with just £10 and the maximum investment is £1,000. It will pay fixed-rate interest of 7.2 per cent gross over a year, or the equivalent of 10 per cent over the 16 months before the Isa starts.

An investor will lose all interest on money removed before the maturity date of May 6, 1999. If no money is taken out, all interest will be paid on maturity and the aim is to pay it tax-free under Isa rules.

Isa Special, pages 62-64

Goldman Sachs stars set for $20m bonus

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

GOLDMAN-SACHS, the US investment bank, will kick off the bonus season with record payouts to its 190 partners next week. Sources claim the partners will receive a minimum of $4 million (£2.4 million) each, while some star performers can expect more than $20 million.

A spectacularly good year for the last remaining partnership on Wall Street will boost pay packages by up to 40 per cent, even after the pay bonanza last year. Managing directors, some earning a relatively modest $150,000 in base salary, will get an average of $1.5 million.

Negotiations over bonuses have dominated business at the bank for the last few weeks and traders and deal-makers will use this weekend to make last-ditch attempts to flatter and bully their bosses into increasing payouts. Final figures will be announced in New York and London on Thursday.

According to former employees, the bonus negotiations are poisoning the atmosphere every year. Roy Smith, a business school tutor who used to be a Goldman partner said: "There is a certain animal character to this. Relatively few people are made very happy, even if their bonuses are very large."

Goldman Sachs declined to comment on the compensation of its partners. But headhunters have confirmed the pay levels. One said: "There is now something called The Phone Club. To be a member, your pay cheque has to be bigger than your phone number. I have heard executives talk about comparing phone bills or even getting a new phone number to get membership." New York has seven-digit phone numbers.

By the end of the bonus season, about 1,000 Wall Street bankers are expected to have been paid more than $1 million each.

Stay with UK, Brown urges Wall St

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

GORDON BROWN, the Chancellor, last night urged Wall Street to maintain its presence in Britain even though the UK will not join European monetary union in the first wave.

He told an audience of top bankers and executives at the British American Chamber of Commerce: "Whatever your views on the euro may be, my message is simple. This British Government is determined to maximise your business opportunities after 1999. British economic policies will go on being right for business.

"Britain will continue to lead Europe towards ever freer trade and more open markets. And Britain will continue to be the best place in Europe from which to exploit the new business opportunities after 1999.

"Britain is now set on a course based on our commitment to the principle of a single currency, and our strategy for preparations now, so that if the Government recommends it early in the next Parliament, the people of Britain can decide."

Mr Brown said Europe's corporatist follies of the past would not be repeated under monetary union.

A WEEK IN THE CITY

Given the huge number of acronymous savings schemes brought to us by the Tories — Tessas, Peps, Furbs (eh?) and the like — it was no surprise this week when new Labour announced it was bringing us the Isa (individual savings accounts).

While this was generally perceived to be a valiant attempt to persuade millions more to save, thrifty Middle England immediately took umbrage at the £50,000 ceiling put on the scheme. Those who used the previous regime to build up tax-free savings of more than £50,000 felt justifiably aggrieved at being told they would now have to pay tax on anything over that amount.

The week started with the headlines dominated by another set of initials, IMF, as it emerged that the International Monetary Fund had finally reached agreement on a $57 billion rescue package for South Korea's ailing economy. The rescue immediately revived hopes that the Asian financial crisis may yet be salvageable, although it failed to prevent Samsung, one of South Korea's "big four" conglomerates or *chaebol*, from shelving plans for a £450 million investment on Teesside.

Back in London, JP Morgan, the US investment bank, suspended two of its traders as the Stock Exchange launched an investigation into a flurry of shares deals last week that sent the FTSE 100 diving 38 points in the final minutes of Friday trading. It seems the traders broke the rules by dumping stocks such as Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham into a thin market. The episode served to heighten fears that Sets, the new automated settlement system, has left the market vulnerable to deliberate manipulation.

On Tuesday, NatWest finally bit the bullet and announced the sale of its NatWest Markets arm for £179 million to Bankers Trust and Deutsche Morgan Grenfell.

In the wake of Barclays's exit from BZW, the move brought down the curtain on ill-fated attempts by UK banks to establish themselves as global players in investment banking. Meanwhile, attempts by Hambros to pep up its lacklustre performance were given a boost by suggestions that Générale of Belgium was in talks to buy its commercial banking arm.

Over in the brewing sector, Bass created a flurry of unwelcome headlines as it took a £177 million hit on its Gala bingo clubs, a traditional British pastime that has never really recovered from the arrival of the National Lottery three years ago. In recent weeks, those in the know have been saying Bass is looking to cut its losses and head for the exit. However, Sir Ian Prosser, chairman, pressed the usual "no comment" button, leaving no one any the wiser. He was equally tightlipped on what he plans to do with the £2 billion war chest the group has built up.

Equally predictable was Thursday's news that the Prudential has again missed a crucial deadline for dealing with its most serious cases of pensions mis-selling. This, just three weeks after Sir Peter Davis, the chief executive, (who funnily enough doesn't seem quite so keen on the Man from the Pru epithet these days) apologised on national TV for his company's part in the £4 billion pensions scandal.

As grumbles over Isa rumbled on through the week, the Government moved to deflect the criticism by claiming the estimates of the number of people adversely affected were "totally ludicrous"; the likely figure was more like 350,000-450,000 rather than the 750,000 cited at Tuesday's launch.

But if you still fall into the 'losers' category, why not follow the lead of Geoffrey Robinson, the multimillionaire Paymaster General who launched the scheme, and put your excess savings offshore? Then start dreaming of that villa in Tuscany.

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IMF sees Asian crisis hitting world economy

By Janet Bush
Economics Editor

THE International Monetary Fund said yesterday that the Asian crisis will cut growth in the world economy next year to 3.5 per cent from 4.3 per cent.

Stanley Fischer, IMF first deputy managing director, said that detailed figures would be published in a special interim World Economic Outlook on December 22. The IMF usually publishes the WEO twice a year but, responding to the Asian crisis, is releasing an updated forecast for only the second time. The first was after the 1987 stock market crash.

Mr Fischer said that strong economic performances in America and Europe were helping to offset the impact of turmoil in Asia but that the outlook in Asia and Japan had worsened significantly since the last WEO in September. He predicted growth in South Korea would drop to a range between 2.5 and 3 per cent. This compares with average annual growth over the past three decades of 8.6 per cent.

Mr Fischer was speaking on the day that South Korea announced the details of a $57 billion (£33.5 billion) bail-out from the IMF whose conditions include the closing of insolvent banks and a dramatic liberalisation of the stock market. The South Korean stock market rallied almost 7 per cent but the bond market crashed. Fears of sweeping corporate defaults sent overnight call money rates in the money markets to their limit of 25 per cent.

The expected impact on world growth from Asia's turmoil leaves US policymakers with a conundrum. The US Federal Reserve was widely thought to have desisted from raising rates at its last meeting on November 12 because of Asia's troubles.

But the domestic economy came back on the agenda with a vengeance yesterday with a very strong US jobs report. The US unemployment rate fell to 4.6 per cent in November from 4.7 per cent in October, the lowest rate since October 1973. The Treasury bond market fell by a full point in reaction. However, the Dow Jones industrial average opened sharply higher.

Top Swiss banks expected to seal £36bn merger

By Our Financial Staff

SHARES in Union Bank of Switzerland and Swiss Bank Corporation, two of the top three Swiss banks, soared yesterday in the belief that the two will shortly announce a merger that would value the pair at $60 billion (£36 billion).

The two banks have held merger discussions. Once combined they would aim to attack the American market via another takeover. Yesterday neither bank would confirm the talks or the imminency of an announcement.

UBS directors have been spurred by the presence on the shareholders' register of Martin Ebner, who believes the best way ahead for the bank is to merge and rationalise. Shares in UBS rose 39 francs to Swfr1,930 and SBC rose 12 francs to Swfr443.

SBC shares have gained roughly 25 per cent in the past six weeks, while UBS has risen around 30 per cent. The rises have dragged the entire Swiss market up by 15 per cent in the past six weeks.

UBS's traditional culture as an old-style bank where employees complain they are not allowed telephone answering machines, contrasts with SBC's strength in IT.

SBC's interests include SBC Brinson, the Chicago-based asset management firm, as well as SG Warburg, the British merchant bank now fused with Dillon Read. UBS owns PDFM in London, the fund manager that has persisted in holding cash despite the strong gains in equities. UBS is slightly larger when measured by assets, would bring volume and increase the possibility for both to gain the needed mass for tackling global markets.

The Swiss have become more open to the idea of megamergers following the relative success of the Novartis pharmaceuticals merger between Ciba-Geigy and Sandoz last year. However, a UBS-SBC deal would have big implications for staff involved in the domestic banking operations.

Rainer Gut, the Crédit Suisse chairman, put UBS in the merger frame last year by suggesting publicly that a merger could help solve the problems that banks face in the increasingly competitive European market.

Nikolaus Senn, then UBS chairman, publicly rejected the offer. But in August Crédit Suisse and the Winterthur insurance group announced a merger. Subsequently Zurich Insurance Group merged with the financial activities of BAT.

Commentary, page 29

Lloyd's ban broker for dishonesty

By Adam Jones

A LLOYD'S of London insurance broker has been banned from the market for life and fined £20,000 after admitting that he concealed a customer's criminal record from his employers.

David Martin, a senior executive director of Special Risk Services, a division of the Minet Group, had been approached by the customer, a company director, in October 1995.

Mr Martin commissioned a report from a private investigator on the director. This revealed that the director had been sentenced to three years' imprisonment for fraud, and concluded that he should not be dealt with.

But Mr Martin fabricated a different report, purporting to come from the same investigator, which made no mention of the criminal record and recommended him as a business partner.

The Lloyd's Disciplinary Tribunal said that it was "an act of calculated dishonesty by a senior employee in a position of trust". Mr Martin also has to pay costs of £5,000.

Bruce Cohen aims to open more Courts stores

Courts is held back by turmoil in Asia

By Our City Staff

THE TURMOIL in South-East Asia and the cost of expansion in the North of England held back growth in profits for Courts, the UK and international furniture and electrical appliances retailer.

Courts lifted pre-tax profits from £9.56 million to £9.71 million in the six months to September 28 on sales up 16 per cent, to £210 million.

The dividend rises 5 per cent, to 1.05p, out of earnings per share down from 9.7p to 7.46p. The fall in earnings was put down to a change in the mix of profit contribution from countries with differing rates of taxation.

The company said that currency exposure and expansion within the British Isles would affect short-term results. "We remain confident in our long-term strategy of maintaining an international spread of businesses and assets," it said.

Courts now has 94 stores in Britain, 59 in South-East Asia, 76 in the Caribbean and 34 in the Pacific/Indian Ocean area. On Asia, the company says that it remains "confident and committed to the region".

Bruce Cohen, chief executive and managing director of Courts, said: "Trading both in the British Isles and overseas in the second half-year so far is ahead of the comparable period last year."

Mr Cohen said that he expects to open six more superstores in the UK in the second half and 11 electrical departments. "A further ten superstores are planned to open in 1998/99," he added.

The shares fell 16p to 441½p.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Chelsea Village will buy stadium freehold

CHELSEA VILLAGE, the parent company of Chelsea FC, the Premiership football club, will buy the freehold of its Stamford Bridge stadium with part of the proceeds of a £75 million eurobond issue, it was announced yesterday. Chelsea is paying £12.4 million for the balance of the freehold on the site, in West London. The site is majority-owned by Stardust Investments, one of the companies run by the executors of the Matthew Harding estate. Mr Harding, a former Chelsea vice-chairman, was killed in a helicopter accident in October 1996.

The rest of the proceeds of the bond issue will be used to pay off £29 million of debt and to fund the completion of the development of Stamford Bridge, Michael Russell, finance director, said. The funds have been ring-fenced in such a way that they cannot be spent on players. Chelsea will shortly open a 160-room hotel at Stamford Bridge and it has also built some 40 apartments at the stadium. Finishing touches are being made to the hotel, which is set to open by early January. Chelsea, coached by Ruud Gullit and boasting an array of foreign players, is second in the 20-team Premiership.

Direct Line returns

A TELEVISION advertisement for Direct Line that was suspended after complaints from rival insurers is to be rebroadcast in the new year. It was suspended last month while the Independent Television Commission investigated complaints that it was misleading and showed traditional insurance brokers in a damaging way. The ITC rejected three of the four areas of complaint and Direct Line has altered the script to address the fourth area of complaint, concerning claims-handling procedures of traditional brokers. The ITC did not uphold a complaint against a claim that people who switched from a broker to Direct Line could save 15 per cent.

Phytopharm's £3m loss

PHYTOPHARM, the biotechnology company whose shares have fallen sharply from 210½p to 45p this year, sought to reassure investors about prospects yesterday despite reporting a rise in pre-tax losses to £3 million (£564,909 loss) in the year to the end of August. The company, which develops traditional herbal remedies from China and Africa, has 12 products in development and talks under way to licence various products for the drugs market. Turnover was £45,000, against £934,000 in 1996, when there was an £800,000 fund from Rhône-Poulenc Rorer to develop Zemaphyte, an eczema drug. Losses were 9.92p a share (2.54p loss) and there is again no dividend.

JLT in £4m deal

JARDINE LLOYD THOMPSON has acquired an interest in two companies involved in the financial risks business for up to $7.2 million (£4.3 million). JLT has entered into an option agreement with Henrik Berggren and other executives to buy their interests in two newly formed companies, JLT Financial Solutions, a Swedish company, and Financial Solutions, a Bermudan company. The companies were formed to own and develop the existing financial insurance portfolio run by the management, including the political and credit risk business formerly of the Max Matthiessen Group, newly acquired by JLT Financial Solutions.

EU inflation dips

INFLATION in the European Union fell slightly, to 1.7 per cent, in October, from 1.8 per cent in September, the EU's statistics agency reported yesterday. EU inflation stood at 2.3 per cent in October last year, Eurostat said. In October this year, the lowest rate was in Ireland, at 0.8 per cent. Greece was by far the worst performer, at 4.6 per cent. Inflation in Britain, as calculated by the EU, was 1.9 per cent. The lowest rates were registered in France and Austria, at 1.1 per cent, while German inflation stood at 1.4 per cent. The EU rate compares to 2.1 per cent in America and 2.5 per cent in Japan.

Gooch to have £17m tag

GOOCH & HOUSEGO, a maker of precision optical components, has issued a prospectus outlining its plan to raise £5.9 million with a placing of shares on the AIM at 105p. Archie Gooch, chairman, said: "We have been delighted with the response from investors. Trading in the current financial year is in line with expectations, and our order book is strong, particularly in the acoustio-optic division." Dealings should start on December 12, and the group will be capitalised at £17.75 million. Of the £5.9 million being raised, £3.9 million is for existing shareholders and £2 million for the company.

WF buys Grants

WF ELECTRICAL has acquired Grants Electrical Supplies, an independent private company, for up to £2.8 million. Grants is an electrical distributor supplying a broad base of customers, including industrial users, local authorities and electrical contractors. The consideration is expected to be between £2.7 million and a maximum of £2.8 million, subject to possible adjustment when the audited profits. Before management charges of £247,000, WF Electrical said Grants achieved pre-tax profits of £344,000 for the year ended March 1997, on sales of £6.6 million.

Knight Williams compensation cut

By John Givens

A 72-YEAR-OLD widow who was one of the victims of Knight Williams, the failed independent financial adviser, has suffered another blow in her campaign to win compensation after an offer made by the Investors Compensation Scheme was cut by £2,000, a decrease of 20 per cent, before she had a chance to accept it.

The pensioner, who has asked not to be named, received a letter from the ICS in November offering £10,518.86 as compensation for a Friends Provident fund sold to her by Knight Williams, which arranged investments for around 24,000 retired people in the 1980s before hitting problems earlier this decade.

However, before she was able to accept the offer, another letter arrived from the ICS saying that new information had come to light and that the compensation payable was being reduced by almost £2,000, to £8,568.93.

The ICS gave no details explaining the change, and a spokesman for the government agency said it could not discuss individual cases. Friends Provident, a mutual, said that it is looking into the matter.

The Knight Williams Action Group has complained to the Treasury about the change.

Hamble helped by demand from Boeing

BOEING has increased demand for aircraft parts produced by Aerostructures Hamble, the EIS Group subsidiary, by committing itself to an extra $140 million (£85 million) in orders (Adam Jones writes).

Production of leading edges for the wings of the Boeing 737-700 will increase from four a month to as many as 14 a month by 1999. Boeing and Airbus are both experiencing massive demand from airlines for their commercial planes. Supply of Hamble's major wing structures for the Boeing C17 Globemaster will also increase.

EIS also announced yesterday the sale of Francis Shaw Rubber Machinery and PRC Fabrications to a subsidiary of Farrel Corporation of the US for £6.5 million in cash.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells		Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia $	2.56	2.38	Malta	0.680	0.621
Austria Sch	21.70	20.04	Netherlds Gld	3.510	3.215
Belgium Fr	63.93	58.97	New Zealand $	2.90	2.66
Canada $	2.476	2.288	Norway Kr	12.55	11.61
Cyprus Cyp£	0.905	0.834	Portugal Esc	313.03	291.00
Denmark Kr	11.80	10.91	S Africa Rd	8.76	7.80
Finland Mkk	9.45	8.70	Spain Pta	259.79	241.00
France Fr	10.3	9.54	Sweden Kr	13.74	12.64
Germany Dm	3.10	2.88	Switzerland Fr	2.52	2.31
Greece Dr	488	449	Turkey Lira	332759	312881
Hong Kong $	13.61	12.41	USA $	1.758	1.615
Iceland	132	112			
Ireland Pt	1.18	1.09			
Israel Shk	6.23	5.58			
Italy Lira	3080	2829			
Japan Yen	229.33	211.80			

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

Liffe and Chicago suspend 1995 agreement

Open outcry peters out

By Martin Barrow

THE London International Financial Futures and Options Exchange (Liffe) and the Chicago Board of Trade have agreed to suspend their open outcry linkage.

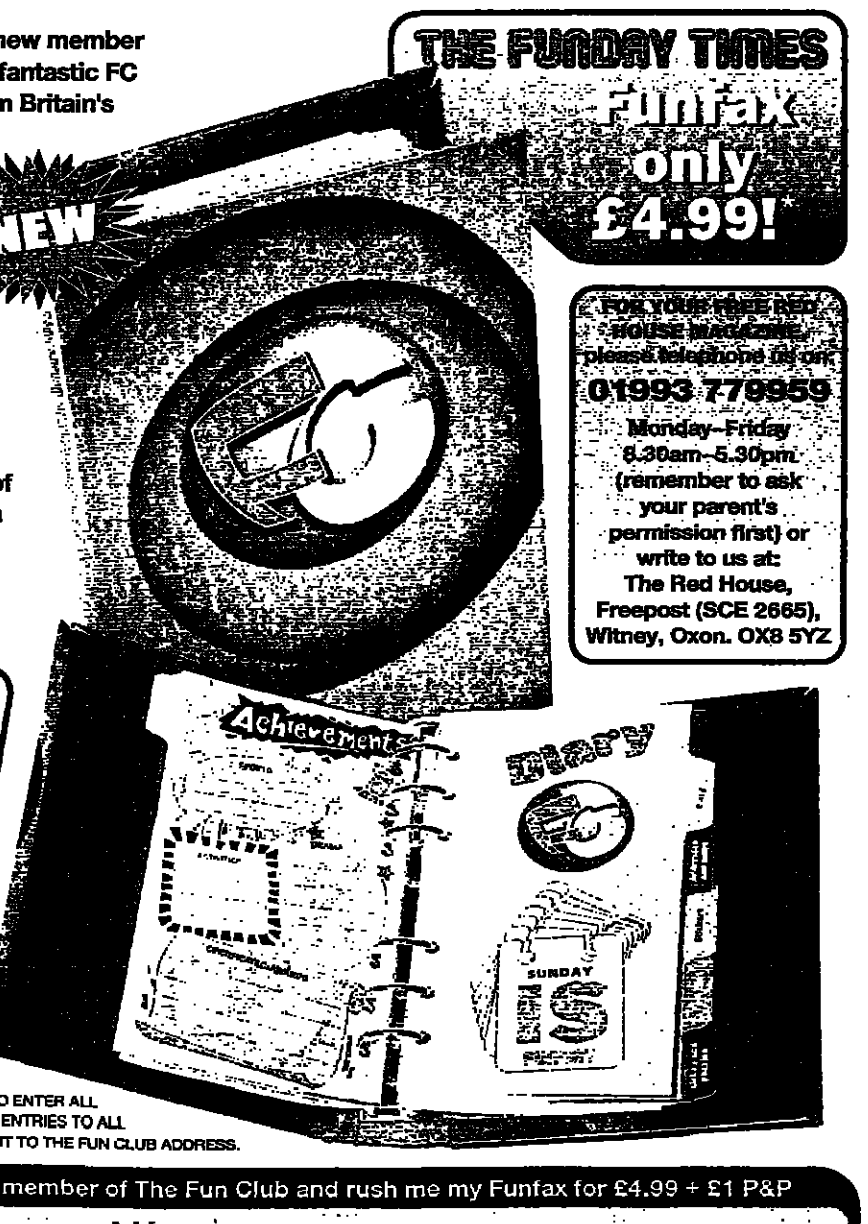
Liffe said the move, which comes into effect from the close of business on December 17, means that US Treasury bond futures and futures options will no longer trade on Liffe's floor. German government bond futures and futures options will no longer trade on the CBOT floor.

The linkage is being ended "due to a lack of trading volume". Liffe said a review had concluded the market does not require the liquidity and responsiveness of open outcry for contracts traded outside Liffe's normal trading hours.

Jack Wrigglesworth, Liffe chairman, said: "This outcome is naturally a disappointment." He added: "The market, though, has clearly shown its preference for using an electronic trading platform for after-hours trading." Liffe's automated pit trading system now deals with 27,000 contracts on an average daily basis.

The Liffe-CBOT open outcry linkage was launched in May after a 1995 agreement to set up an open outcry linkage as a way to capture business for their respective products during trading hours outside their time zones.

A CBOT spokesman said the two exchanges would "pursue other strategic opportunities" to support their partnership.



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هكذا من الأصل

Swiss banks on a roll

COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

Gnomic messages suggest that the Union Bank Corporation of Switzerland is being conceived. This product of UBS and SBC would then bolster itself with the acquisition of a major US player and be prepared to take on the emerging premier league of the investment banking world.

It was the realisation that they could not afford to play in that league which persuaded Barclays and then National Westminster to give up the game. The emerging Swiss mammoth will be a match for the handful of global giants which are determined to dominate the banking scene in the next century but the British houses, and particularly their shareholders, were not prepared to put up the capital necessary to come near to competing.

Not so long ago, they argued convincingly the case for scale. Clients deserving of the fashionable description "global" demanded bankers who were equally international, they said. The one-stop shop was the shape of the future. The huge current success of organisations such as Merrill Lynch would seem to amply support that view.

But now, with the clear vision born of necessity, it seems that NatWest is taking a fresh look at the demands of the market place. And what does it find? The NatWest name over the door of its corporate finance business is not an asset at all and it is to go. The bank will provide the capital clout that is needed but remain a discreetly anonymous backer. Those chaps from Hambro Magan, who little more than a year ago cost NatWest a very generous rumoured £500 million, are now to be spared the indignity of working under the high street banner.

Along with the remains of County NatWest, the corporate advisory business is to be rebranded and the executives given the chance to take a stake. The banking parent will retain a controlling shareholding in NotWest, which aims to regain the boutique status Hambro Magan enjoyed before succumbing to last year's irresistible offer.

George Magan in his most creative corporate financier mode could not have been expected to produce a happier scenario for himself and his colleagues.

They will be able to celebrate their good fortune in good company, for the City is preparing for another round of bumper bonuses after the hectic activity of the last year. Howard Davies, the chairman of the infant Financial Services Authority, has already warned that the scale of City rewards will be bound to cause unrest in less well remunerated corners of the country

He is undoubtedly right. Those who begrudge the City its salaries are not impressed by the argument that jobs in the Square Mile are precarious. But that is the case, and the Swiss banking merger is likely to put paid to another swathe. Most victims, however, languish at the lower end of the salary scale, in the back offices where savings are easily made.

Time for BG to turn on to lower bills

We have seen a little recovery in the property market lately. But for BG, the operators of the Transco gas pipeline, it seems there has been an almighty boom.

Several months ago after the bitter fighting between the company and the industry regulator over pricing curbs for Transco, BG told the Monopolies and Mergers Commission that it would rationalise its property portfolio but "did not expect to make an overall profit for such a rationalisation".

In a swift volte-face it recently said that it could drum up about £800 million from its property portfolio while incurring about £350 million of liabilities in environmental requirements to clean up the contaminated land. BG has more than 1,000 sites in its property portfolio, many of them prime city centre locations which developers would love to get their hands on. Its idea, finance director Philip Hampton waxed, was to boost the operations of its exploration arm with the proceeds.

But not so fast, if the regulator has anything to do with it. BG's declaration on its property assets to the MMC was made so that a full picture of its financial make-up could be assembled and therefore a reasonable rate of return be assessed. That way the company gets what is deemed fair and the customers of the monopoly pay what is fair.

If BG has had a sudden and surprising upturn in its expectations from its property portfolio — for surely that must be the case rather than it was in any way forgetful or confused about the figures it gave to the MMC — then customers should benefit too.

The scale of the discrepancy is not insubstantial — £14 off bills for a year at Ofgas's highest estimate, £7 at its lowest. Those who find it hard to heat their homes in the winter would rather BG share its surprising fortune than pump it into oil and gas exploration that will eventually translate to shareholder profits.

The battle between BG and Ofgas over Transco's pricing was fierce. Philip Rogerson, the deputy chairman, said the curbs amounted to the "biggest smash and grab raid" in corporate history. The company then ate its words when the MMC asked for an even greater cut in bills than the regulator had pressed for. Posturing from companies and regulators is part of the regulatory game. But the forecasts they offer to the MMC should be sacrosanct. Now BG should eat its figures along with its words and pledge that customers will also see some of its property boom.

Collective memory loss helps markets

Remember October, when Eastern markets fell off the cliff and Western ones miraculously clung on to an overhang about an eighth of the way down? Those whose time horizon stretches back that far are in a shrinking minority.

After the upsurge of the past two days, supposedly fed by the IMF's deal with Korea, London's FTSE-100 share index is about 2½ per cent off its peak and still up a quarter in 1997 with three weeks to go. On Wall Street the Dow is up almost as much and is even nearer its best.

Are Western financial markets merely convalescing from an unaccountable dizzy spell? Well, no. On the IMF's updated but still less than hysterical forecast, a fifth will be lopped off the world economy's potential for 1998, taking growth down from 4.3 per cent to 3.5 per cent. The last time the IMF changed forecast midstream was after the 1987 crash.

After a buoyant 1997, Britain should not manage anything like that. UK interest rates have risen again and will certainly rise several notches further unless the economy almost grinds to a halt in the first half of next year. Projections of growth in company earnings are shrinking by the month and profit warnings linked to sterling outnumber happy surprises.

As so often, bulls hope for more takeovers but depend on an old warhorse. The Fed's Alan Greenspan continues to guide the US economy briskly and skilfully along the tightrope between inflation and recession. He had better keep it up.

A good idea

THE Innovations catalogue falls through the nation's letterboxes, bursting with present ideas for the person who has everything except a device for keeping spiders out of the bath or moles out of the garden. John Hoerner bought it for Burton as a quick way to learn the direct mail business. When he sold it to GUS for a small profit, he held onto the Innovations offshoot he wanted and the man with the direct mail brains. That's cute.

Betterware poised to quit market in buyout

By Fraser Nelson

BETTERWARE, the doorstep retailer, is set to end its turbulent history on the stock market through a leveraged buyout tabled by Peter Hartley, its managing director, and Paul Turner, its finance director.

Andrew Cohen, whose family controls just under half of the company, is understood to have agreed in principle to the deal and is set to sell out for about £50 million in cash.

Betterware shares, which have crumbled in value over the past three years, rose 4½p to 102p yesterday after a 10 per cent rise the day before. The company is now valued at £107 million.

Neither Mr Hartley, Mr Turner nor Mr Cohen were available for comment yesterday.

Mr Turner was been in his job for less then nine months, and he and Mr Hartley are said to have been taking greater control over the company as Mr Cohen took a more relaxed position.

The news was greeted with disbelief in the City yesterday, as analysts said a buyout would deprive shareholders of the widely expected recovery in its profits.

Betterware is only 16 per cent owned by leading institutions, and 47.9 per cent owned by its present directors.

If Mr Hartley and Mr Turner have Mr Cohen's support, they need win over only one institution to have the offer backed.

A spokesman for the attempted bidders said: "Betterware isn't going to be a dazzling performer. It has no big acquisition plans, and it isn't going to stun the market with much else. The question is whether it should continue to be a public company, and the answer is probably not."

He pointed out that Mr Cohen has been easing away from the front-line management of the company over the past few years, and has been building up other business interests.

If an offer was made at 110p a share, this would provide an exit multiple of 14 times forecast earnings.

The company was expected to raise profits by 9 per cent to £12.5 million this year and deliver £13.9 million afterwards.

Betterware joined the market 11 years ago. It has steadily been paying the Cohen family around £1.2 million a year in dividends ever since, with an extra £4.6 million dividend in April through a special dividend.

Three years ago, Mr Cohen raised £31 million from selling a large part of the stake just before a series of profits warnings sent the market value tumbling by 82 per cent.

Tempus, page 31

H&C sells petfood business

By Martin Barrow

THE restructuring of Harrisons & Crosfield took another step forward yesterday when the company announced the sale of its Edward Baker petfoods business to Ralston Purina for £106.3 million.

The divestment is the latest stage in the streamlining of the former conglomerate into a focused speciality chemicals business. Last month the company sold its Harcros builders merchants chain to Meyer International for £318 million.

Early next year H&C proposes to return to its shareholders £359 million, equivalent to 50p a share. More money may be returned if the company, which is to be renamed Elementis, cannot identify suitable acquisitions in the chemicals sector.

Edward Baker produces extruded and baked pet foods for the grocery and pet trade markets across Europe. The business was acquired by H&C in 1989 and was subsequently expanded via the purchase of Petfood Service, a Dutch supplier of dry pet food, in 1995. Last year the business earned operating profits of £8.6 million on sales of £71.1 million.

Proceeds from the latest disposal will be used to reduce borrowings. The shares rose 6½p to 123½p.

ROBIN MAYES

Michael Shallow, left, finance director, David McCall, chairman, and Tim Bridge, chief executive, toast success

Greene King profits leap 26%

By Dominic Walsh

GREENE KING, the Suffolk brewer and pubs group, shrugged off recent gloom over the viability of the "local" with interim pre-tax profits up by 26 per cent to £19.1 million.

Shares in the group rose 19½p, to 676p, as David McCall, chairman, said the group's strong performance meant that shareholders would receive a 12 per cent rise in the interim dividend to 5.3p. Earnings per share were up 13 per cent, to 23.7p.

The managed houses division, which continues to benefit from the £200 million acquisition of the Magic Pub Company last year, turned in a 39 per cent rise in trading profits to £18.4 million. Leading the way was the food-based Hungry Horse community pubs concept that came with Magic Pub. Mr McCall said: "We believe that the perceived problems of community pubs have been greatly exaggerated and that, with appropriate infrastructure and retail skills, growth opportunities exist throughout all retail sectors."

Brewing profits advanced by 13 per cent, to £3.4 million, on the back of a 7 per cent growth in volume. Abbot Ale was up 19 per cent and Green King IPA was up 1 per cent. The tenanted estate profits up 5 per cent rise, to £8.4 million.

RJB halts 100 job losses at Yorkshire pit

By Christine Buckley, Industrial Correspondent

RJB MINING has halted 100 redundancies at Maltby colliery, near Rotherham, while it maps out a wide-ranging cost-cutting programme with the unions.

Richard Budge, chief executive, made the decision "in the light of the ongoing uncertainty", after a meeting with two of the coal unions. But contract workers at the pit will still leave.

The decision comes amid uncertainty engulfing the industry and with expectations that the Government will announce more measures to support the industry after this week's U-turn on the building of gas-fired power stations.

Peter McNestry, general secretary of Nacods, the pit deputies union, said: "Neither side knows exactly where we are. We are looking at getting prices down."

Mr McNestry added: "The short-term solution to the problem in coal has got to be political. Cost-cutting won't feed through that quickly."

The redundancy delay may, however, stoke fears that miners will lose substantial entitlements for compensation under Tupe [redundancy and benefit obligations taken over from the former British Coal]. RJB must adhere to Tupe terms only until the end of March. Then miners and colliery management will get only statutory terms. For the better-paid workers the shortfall will be substantial.

Before the meeting with Nacods and the British Association of Colliery Management, Mr Budge had been bullish on export hopes. He hopes to clinch deals to sell eight million tonnes of coal to Germany and Spain amid government representations about the amount of state subsidies those countries pay to their coal industries.

Mr Budge said: "Given that there is a market then we will sell what we are producing. We will know about Germany and Spain soon and there is also PowerGen."

PowerGen is the last of the three main generators with whom RJB is negotiating new contracts. It has been speculated that PowerGen could hold off coal deals until it knows the prospects for the company's development, such as whether it can buy a regional electricity company.

In the hot seat, page 30

OFT warns brokers licences may be lost

By Gavin Lumsden

JOHN BRIDGEMAN, Director-General of Fair Trading, yesterday stepped up his campaign against oppressive lending by issuing warnings to two "master" brokers linked to City Mortgage Corporation (CMC), the controversial lender to vulnerable borrowers.

He has told Capital Credit of Truro and Charles Ashworth Finance of Stockport and seven associated companies that he is minded to revoke their consumer credit licences. They have 21 days to apply.

Both brokers operate in the "non-status" market arranging loans for credit-impaired people who answer advertisements in tabloid newspapers. Both have profited from their links with CMC, the largest lender in this market, which has come under fire from borrowers for its punitive level of charges and fees.

In August *The Times* highlighted the case of a paraplegic living on income support and disability benefit, who was facing repossession by CMC after he took out a loan arranged by Capital Credit.

Two directors of Capital Credit; Antony Murtagh and Roy Leslie Clayton, have previously survived OFT sanction. Both were directors of eight companies associated with Richard Murtagh [Antony's father] Holdings, whose consumer credit licences were withdrawn by the OFT for deceitful and oppressive lending in 1989. Capital Credit, formerly called Carrox, won an appeal against the OFT.

In August, David Steene, CMC managing director, supported Capital Credit's right to trade. Yesterday the lender said it was reviewing its relationship with the company. It has already terminated its links with Charles Ashworth.

John Bridgeman is keen to stamp out oppressive lending

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Readicut to sell off £50m of businesses

By Martin Barrow

READICUT INTERNATIONAL, the UK textiles company, yesterday announced a wide-ranging restructuring that will culminate with the disposal of businesses with a value of about £50 million.

The company is selling its European Carpets subsidiary — UK and Dutch carpet businesses that trade under the Firth, JHS and Vebe banners — to Interface Inc, a US group, for £30 million. In the year to March 31, European Carpets earned operating profits of £2.9 million, up from £1.4 million.

Readicut said it was also close to announcing the sale of Bloomsburg Carpet Industries in America and the yarn-spinning business of Stonehouse Battye in the UK in separate transactions. Funds from the disposals will be reinvested in Readicut's wallcoverings, fibres and home products activities, which generate higher profit margins.

The company announced a £5 million investment in a new wallcoverings factory next to its existing fibres facility in Virginia.

Readicut hopes to replicate the success of its fibres unit in America, which was established last year at a cost of about £17 million. The venture, a supplier to the US automotive industry, holds the number two position in its market, and is to benefit from a further investment of £2 million to expand capacity by 20 per cent.

Readicut expects to incur a £3 million loss on the disposals. Accounts for the year to the end of March 1998 will also include about £27 million relating to goodwill previously written off to reserves.

Readicut reported a rise in pre-tax profits to £4.5 million from £3.3 million for the six months to the end of September. Earnings of 1.48p a share compared with 1.12p previously. The interim dividend is unchanged at 0.63p.

Could the future be fabulous for Baker and his IT boys?

Chris Ayres looks at the confident character behind the rise of Glotel

Man, mentors and motivation: Andy Baker, left, Bill Gates, top, Norman Tebbit, bottom left, and Loadsamoney

There is a common disease in the City which, from time to time, seems to affect all industries. Biotechnology companies, media ventures and businesses that use celebrities to boost their profiles, suffer the most.

The affliction, called hype, is currently causing delirium in the information technology sector. Andy Baker, the precocious 32-year-old founder and chief executive of Glotel, an up-and-coming IT recruitment company, is hype personified.

"I don't think there is anything that pays more or is as exciting as the IT market," he enthuses from his Soho office. "We have never had a bad debt in our history and never will. You can't have bad debts in this business."

Glotel is one of the many companies making a fortune out of the chronic shortage of qualified IT professionals in the City. The infamous millennium bug, which is expected to cost £400 billion to fix worldwide, plus the task of altering computer systems to recognise the European single currency, have both helped to boost demand.

It is estimated that there is a shortfall of up to 50,000 computer software experts in Britain, and that the City could take an extra 5,000 professionals overnight. There are believed to be about 600,000 computer specialists working in the UK, with about 700 of them being supplied by Glotel.

"If you have a niche specialisation, if you're a millennium project manager, you're going to be in huge demand," says Mr Baker. "Ten, twenty or thirty companies will be interested in your services. You can pretty much quote what you want."

Mr Baker, who began his career as a salesman in the IT industry after failing his A-levels, founded Glotel in 1989 when he was 25. Since then, the company's average annual growth has been 77 per cent, and the company now has sales of £49 million and profits of £1.8 million. It was recently rated as one of the fastest growing private UK companies by Price Waterhouse.

Glotel, which employs 200 internal staff, has achieved this growth entirely organically, and plans to float on the Stock Exchange within the next two years. It has also managed to set-up successful operations in the US, Australia, Singapore and The Netherlands.

The company specialises in looking after the new breed of ultra-arrogant — and predominantly male — boffins that the IT industry has spawned. It finds them the best jobs, and bids up their salaries, taking a hefty 23 per cent cut for itself. Mr Baker thinks the boom will go on forever.

"We're going to become a billion-pound business," he says, as if calculating the chance of night following day. "In the world today the two biggest markets are the IT and telecoms industry, and the temporary labour industry. We're in both."

"The key is for us to have more jobs, in more locations, with more technical coverage than any other company. If we floated and our growth slowed down we would then look at buying companies to add on to services we do at the moment."

Mr Baker, whose parents still live in a council flat, makes "Loadsamoney" look like a Liberal Democrat. His political hero is Norman Tebbit, and he is fond of the phrase "posh socialist bastards". He is evangelical about the benefits of not going to university and says he wants to become as famous as Bill Gates, the billionaire Microsoft founder.

Its hard to decide who are the most arrogant: the IT professionals themselves, or the people who headhunt them. After all, it is as normal for a 22-year-old IT recruitment officer to earn £60,000 a year, as it is for a 19-year-old systems analyst to earn £500 a day. None of them seem to believe that the bubble will ever burst.

"The average salary in this industry is still only £1,200 a week," laments Mr Baker. "But if you go into one of the merchant banks in the City and watch the staff coming out at lunch time, you won't be able to tell the IT people from the dealers."

The ability of young IT professionals to earn so much money has been created partly by the speed at which technology is changing, as well as a shortage of skills. Mr Baker says: "If you go into the market, straight out of university, and spend 18 months working on some hot new database, your experience in that market is as much experience as anyone has. You could have a 47-year-old who's been in the market 25 years, but if that database has been out only 18 months, his knowledge is going to be no better than that of a 22-year-old."

The biggest threat to Glotel, and other companies like it, is that as the IT market grows, the competition between suppliers of labour will also grow. The margins of 23 per cent that Glotel is currently enjoying could soon disappear.

"There's well over a thousand companies in this market doing what we do," admits Mr Baker. "Even though the IT people are hard to find, the clients are hard to find too, because they will get about 50 calls a week from companies like us trying to get business."

Although the competition is tough, especially in Britain, it still has a long way to go. However, Glotel always has the option to look overseas, where the market is in an even earlier stage of development. Mr Baker says: "The margins overseas are much higher. They can be as high as 27 per cent. And because we are worldwide, we are recession-proof."

The other threat is the Internet, where IT professionals can advertise their services without the need for a recruitment company. But Mr Baker is not worried. "You still need to interview people," he says. "If you go around pulling CVs off the Internet you may as well place an advert yourself. Bits of paper mean nothing. All you're getting off the Internet is a piece of paper. What's the big deal there?"

It is difficult to see through the hype of Glotel, and decide whether it is more than just another enthusiastic start-up, operating in a rapidly expanding industry. The laws of economics suggest that the shortage of IT labour will be filled, margins will fall, and competition, even in developing economies, will become intense. Until then, Mr Baker and his cohorts should enjoy their money while it lasts. Although, of course, he doesn't believe it will end.

"This market is so massive," he says. "You'll soon be able to organise all your shopping from home, see your Granny on the videophone, do all your work from your car, and you'll probably want to holiday in Mars rather than Tenerife. All these things that are going to happen are related to IT and telecommunications."

Foxon hounds

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

ALMOST two years on from the Granada takeover, and senior Forte executives left from the old days are almost as thin on the ground as people called Forte. All the sadder, therefore, to hear (via an internal memo) that Marten Foxon, Forte's property director for the past eight years, is striking out and going solo. Foxon's departure, unusual at Granada for being of his own volition, comes now his job, the sale of Exclusive Hotels, is largely completed.

Although Lazards took the credit for offloading such famous names as the George V in Paris, the Sandy Lane in Barbados and London's Hyde Park hotel, those in the know credit Foxon with keeping the process going at a cracking pace. For example, when the Sultan of Brunei's bid for the George V bogged down, it was he who persuaded a rival moneybags, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal of Saudi Arabia, to find £104 million at a moment's notice.

☐ *WHITHER Dick Emery, they ask at the BBC? He (and is there some reason why he should not bear the name?) is chief operating officer of BBC Worldwide, the commercial arm. Many thought he would be a shoo-in to replace Bob Phillis, now chairman of the Guardian Media Group, as head of Worldwide. In recent years at the BBC he was responsible for negotiations on the Corporation's big new commercial ventures, the links with Discovery Communications and Flextech. Unfortunately the BBC decided that a job of such importance would have to be tested in the market — ie put out to head hunters. The question is whether Emery will hang around or whether offers may come from either Discovery or Flextech, companies known for making their minds up rather more quickly than the Beeb.*

Older model

IF YOUR husband works in the City and he airily lets slip that he is arranging a corporate hospitality bash with an outfit called Hurtwood, start worrying. A friend has seen the brochure now doing the rounds. All-inclusive football packages, chauffeur-driven super-stretch limos, it promises. Oh, and "the finest selection of Playboy, Page Three and celebrity models", although, and I put this as charitably as I can, their best days as models would appear from the accompanying photos to be behind them. "All packages can be imaginatively created to meet your individual demands — there are no limits."

☐ *ON THURSDAY Grand Metropolitan announced its last figures as an independent company before the merger with Guinness. So it was the last time George Bull, the GrandMet chairman, would be in sole command. At the same time a horse was romping home at 20 to 1 at Windsor. Its name was George Bull. Don't ask me what it all means.*

Thrown back

SOME cheerful news from the Far East for a change. A budget-cutting plan prompted by Thailand's economic crisis threatened some 200 government employees. The board and lodging they had enjoyed for years, at a cost of about £250 a month, was at risk from an eight-point austerity plan. But after a protest from fellow employees, the 200 colourful Japanese carp which occupy a pond at the Thai parliament won a reprieve. "Most of the measures were reasonable and practical, but the number eight measure dealing with the fish was seen as unacceptable by staff," said a parliamentary source.

Horror story

A NEW bogeyman is born: Chris Smith, Heritage Secretary, at this week's Media Society dinner: "If anyone gives me any trouble I just tell them I'll get Gerald Kaufman to write a report on them."

MARTIN WALLER

Kaufman: scary

Coal king proves tough nut

Richard Budge is both King Coal and its *bête noire*. He has both saved coal mining in the UK and recklessly endangered it with a game of brinkmanship and politics, depending on whose view you seek.

On his decisions the future of a large part of the English coal industry now rests. That industry is staring over a cliff edge that in April threatens to wipe out up to eight collieries if sufficient coal sales are not made to shore up the shortfall in deals made with two of the largest electricity generators. The furore created by Labour backbenchers, the unions and, privately, by Cabinet members over impending pit closures has bounced the Government into imposing a moratorium on new gas-fired stations. While that will do nothing in the short term, it does at least signal a possible future for coal.

Since the Government's decision, Budge has spoken more optimistically. He says: "We have business plans for all the collieries but we are dependent on the market." He is hopeful of exports that could plug the gap between sales to National Power and Eastern, and RJB's capacity. Some of the heat could be leaving the coal crisis after the political clash satisfied one of Budge's key objectives — that the Government should deliver some sort of energy policy in which coal has a role.

The policy change is more recognition of the political fallout from pit closures, late though it dawned, than Budge's stance. But the fact that the coal contract negotiations have gone right up to the wire underline Budge's reputation as a hard bargainer prepared to take on the Government on the highly emotive issue of coal.

The picture of Budge is a mixed one. Many of his miners praise him as a businessman who wants to talk to them at the coalface and he makes many descents to the hot, dark factory floor of RJB Mining. In dealings with the generators and the Department of Trade and Industry, he is often cited as a man who plays cynical games with miners' jobs.

There are real fears among the coal unions that Budge could be stalling and will not announce coal closures until after March 31, when his responsibility for substantial redundancy payments ends.

Speculation is rife that Mr Budge has dangled the pit-closure sword over the Government's head for some time. Allegedly he held out the prospect of an announcement as Tony Blair was poised to deliver his speech to the Labour Party conference. He denies this.

John Battle, the Energy Minister, has made increasingly obvious his annoyance with Budge. The minister has personalised much of the coal crisis and potential pit closures as the direct responsibility of Budge. Budge says he never tried to engineer a crisis. "The problem is that 85 per cent of the contracts ended at the same time. We have been talking to the generators for a long time."

Whether or not it has been politically astute to personalise the crisis, there is no doubt that the emphasis has had resonance. Despite Budge's reluctance to court a high public profile he has acquired one, and opinions about him, though they differ, are strongly held. Budge has refused to respond to increasingly personal attacks by Mr Battle. "He (Mr Battle) obviously thinks he has done what is the best job," he says.

Budge began his climb to business fame and notoriety five years ago when he quit the company founded by his older brother Tony to start his own mining company. The move from AF Budge — where he had developed opencast mining — set in train Richard's success and cast a cloud over his commercial reputation. AF Budge went into receivership, with more than £90 million of debts, soon after Richard left and the brothers' behaviour as directors came under attack. While Tony, his wife Janet and another director, Michael Yates, were disqualified by the DTI, the case against Richard was dropped. He had been attacked for taking out loans from the company but said the money was owed to him. He repaid to the receiver £325,000 of the £400,000 he had in loans.

The case against Richard was dropped in 1995 when RJB Mining, the company he began from the purchase of the £100 million of mining assets from his brother's business, became the preferred bidder for the bulk of the English and Welsh collieries. Questions were asked in the Commons about his suitability.

Budge's early days at the helm were rosy. Profitability came through quickly and RJB was able to repay some of its debts early. Critics who had mocked Budge for paying too high a price for the collieries, at £815 million, went on to complain that he had paid too little. Last year he made £2.2 million by selling 400,000 shares in a share buyback, although he still retains 3.6 million shares. Then his pay rose 62 per cent in a performance-related package to £666,000.

While the threat to coal from the dash-for-gas was eroding the expected lifespan of coal, nobody expected a Labour Government would let that happen. They expected wrong — until this week.

IN THE HOT SEAT

CV: RICHARD BUDGE

Born Lincolnshire; aged 50. Educated at grammar school. Career in road construction and opencast mining with brother's company, which went into receivership. 1992: Founded RJB Mining. 1994: Bought the bulk of the collieries in England and Wales.

Richard Budge holds future of miners in his hands

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THE TIMES SATURDAY DECEMBER 13 1997

STOCK MARKET — MICHAEL CLARK

Stock Market Writer of the Year

Strong finish — but best yet to come, say brokers

SHARE prices ended the week on a high note after a helter-skelter performance that left investors breathless.

Encouraged by Wall Street's resilience in the face of stronger than expected US employment numbers, the London market staged a 130.6-point turnround before closing below its best levels of the day.

In the event, the FTSE 100 Index finished 60.6 points up, at 5,142.9, stretching the lead on the week to 311.1, or 6.43 per cent. But brokers say the best is still to come and claim the market is capable of a further 100-point rise during the early part of next week. For reassurance they look to the financial future, where the March series closed with a 52-point premium over the cash market.

The buyers appeared to be acquiring stock at any price last night as they compared the premium between the two markets. "There is no point in fighting it. You have got to go with it," said one broker.

Once again it was the banks that led the way. They remain a hot-bed of speculation with a single buyer of **National Westminster Bank** forcing the price 14¼p higher at 940p as 6.23 million shares changed hands. Speculators say this week's disposal of its global equities arm leaves the company vulnerable to an approach.

It is already known to have talked with **Abbey National**, up 15p at £10.10, **Barclays**, 16p better at £15.46, and **Prudential**, 3p cheaper at 706p.

Lloyds TSB rose 28p to 760p with the help of some positive comments from SBC Warburg Dillon Read, the broker. Lloyds has been been mentioned as a possible bidder for **Norwich Union**, down 13p at 380p on profit-taking.

Elsewhere in the financial sector, **General Accident** leapt 52p to £11.30.

Reuters jumped a further 21½p to 731½p reflecting this week's decision to give back £1.5 billion to shareholders by way of a complicated share buy-back scheme. Henderson Crosthwaite, the broker, met the company yesterday and was clearly impressed with the outcome. Trading remains strong despite the group's exposure to the troubled Far East markets.

Peter Job, chief executive of Reuters, up 21½p at 731½p

Henderson is confident that a lot of the cash will eventually find its way back into the shares before, and after, the payout in February.

BTR's fifth profits warning in just over three years was greeted with dismay in the Square Mile and left the shares nursing a loss of 25½p at 182½p. The company said profits are now likely to be in line with the £601 million achieved in the first six months. The market had been looking for something more rewarding. It blamed the strong pound and the downturn in Far Eastern markets.

Bass staged a comeback, with a jump of 37½p at 921p. A "buy" recomendation from BZW helped. Analyst James Carnegie is pushing the shares despite a dull set of profits earlier this week. He is pinning his hopes on the brewer making an exciting acquisition at some stage.

In the oil sector, **Ramco Energy** surged 62½p to 862½p. Whispers circulating within the Square Mile suggest the group is about to tie-up a deal with Conoco and Socar, the Azerbaijan state oil company, to redevelop the shallow Guneshli Field.

Keep an eye on **Vodafone**, where attempts this week to call the shares lower have failed miserably. The price was racing away again yesterday to close 11½p higher at a new peak of 403½p with "buy" recommendations from the likes of Société Générale Strauss Turnbull, Merrill Lynch and SBC Warburg.

Behind Vodafone's rise during the early part of the week was persistent talk about a bid for the company with American Telephone and Telegraph tipped as a potential suitor.

The buying also spilled over into rival **Orange**, up 11p at 264p, with **Securicor**, reporting later this month, adding 4p at 288p.

There was a further decline in the fortunes of **Ionica**, the troubled telecoms group, which shed a further 5p at 102½p, stretching the loss on the week to 13½p, as institutional selling was revived. It follows last month's disappointing trading news which offered brokers little hope for the future. The shares have now come down from a peak of 421p this year.

Caradon rose 1½p to 191p as the company continued to buy back its own shares. Cazenove, the broker, acting on its behalf has snapped up a further 1.75 million at 187p.

Brokers reported further selective buying of the specialist chemical companies as the sector continued to enjoy something of a re-rating in the wake of the recent flurry of bid activity. **Allied Colloids**, currently fighting off the unwanted attentions of Hercules in the US, finished 1p lighter at 168½p, while profit taking trimmed **Holiday Chemicals** 1p, to 233½p after receiving a bid approach this week. **Brent International** firmed 1p to 106½p, and **Laporte** 3p to 638½p. Peter Edwards at ABN AMRO Hoare Govett, the broker, says consolidation within the industry has begun in Europe.

Tomkins fell 6¼p to 306p amid signs that institutional investors have begun switching into **Williams**, 4½p cheaper at 350½p.

☐ **GILT EDGED:** Opening falls were accelerated by the latest US non-farm payroll numbers with losses stretching by up to £1 at the longer end. Prices in London followed US Treasury bonds lower as the prospect of a rise in US interest rates came back to haunt investors.

In the futures pit, the March series of the Long Gilt lost £$^{11}/_{16}$ to close at £119$^{11}/_{32}$ as the total number of contracts completed reached 90,000. Among conventional issues, Treasury 8 per cent 2021 shed £1 at £118½, while among shorter dated issues Treasury 7 per cent 2002 was £¼ off at £100$^{29}/_{32}$.

☐ **NEW YORK:** Shares held firm as the shock of November payroll figures faded, with investors confident that the Federal Reserve Board would not raise interest rates. At midday, the Dow Jones industrial average was up 81.32 points at 8,131.48.

Billiton rose 7¼p to 155p after talking to institutional shareholders. It seems to have convinced them that things are not as bad as they were led to believe. Joint brokers UBS and Robert Fleming are both rushing out "buy" circulars. The price has come back from a peak of 249½p.

MOVERS OF THE WEEK

	Current price	Week's change	
Mayborn Group	93½p	-59p	Profits warning
Hambros	257½p	+5p	Bid approaches
Morrish Ashby	395½p	+50p	Auto Components bids
Zetters	129½p	+13p	Bid approach
UDO Holdings	175p	+15p	Bid approach
Ionica Group	102½	-13½p	Renewed selling
Dorling Kindersley	200p	-39p	Profits warning
Holliday Chemicals	233½p	+59½p	Bid approach
Watmoughs	278½p	+65p	Rejects Quebecor bid

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):

Dow Jones	8131.48 (+81.32)
S&P Composite	981.79 (+8.69)

Tokyo:

Nikkei Average	16424.48 (+117.69)

Hong Kong:

Hang Seng	11527.70 (+52.66)

Amsterdam:

AEX Index	930.50 (-1.77)

Sydney:

AO	2557.2 (+4.7)

Frankfurt:

DAX	4170.06 (+30.28)

Singapore:

Straits	1713.77 (+13.54)

Brussels:

General	14208.07 (+63.94)

Paris:

CAC-40	2910.09 (+4.36)

Zurich:

SKA Gen	1234.00 (+5.50)

London:

FT 30	3279.8 (+15.4)
FTSE 100	5142.9 (+60.6)
FTSE 250	4751.3 (+26.8)
FTSE 350	2469.0 (+26.2)
FTSE Eurotrack 100	2656.83 (+7.39)
FTSE All-Share	2409.33 (+24.28)
FTSE Non Financials	2426.79 (+23.90)
FTSE Fixed Interest	132.00 (-0.37)
FTSE Govt Secs	99.96 (+0.52)
Bargains	63570
SEAQ Volume	807.2m
US$	1.6563 (-0.0199)
German Mark	2.9532 (-0.0136)
Exchange Index	104.3 (-0.6)
Bank of England official close (4pm)	
£:ECU	1.5033
£:SDR	1.2370
RPI	159.5 Oct (3.7%) Jan 1987=100
RPIX	157.9 Oct (2.8%) Jan 1987=100

RECENT ISSUES

Advance UK Tst	101½	+ 1
BG 'B'	30½	...
Boustead	21	...
CRC	125½	+ 5
Capital Opps Tst	113½	...
Cresco Intl	153½	...
Flmg Geared Uts	72½	...
Foresight Tech Wts	25	- 5
Foresight Tech	85	- 15
Metalsrussia	73½	...
Minorplanet Sys	57½	...
Northern Recrtmnt	121½	+ 1
Nottingham Frst (70)	54	...
Range Cooker Cmpy	6¼	...
Rapid Technology	98½	...
Savoy Asset Mngmt	113½	...
Seascope Shipping	251½	- 1½
Tetra	175	...

RIGHTS ISSUES

FI Group n/p (640)	205	...
Green Prop n/p (350)	30	- 2

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:

Christies Intl	249½p (+20p)
London Clubs	289p (+14p)
Helphire Gp	285½p (+13p)
Tesco	531½p (+24p)
DCS Gp	258½p (+11p)
Orange	264p (+11p)
Bass	921p (+37½p)
Close Bros	521½p (+21p)
Guinness	572p (+23p)
De La Rue	417½p (+16p)
Lloyds TSB	760p (+28p)
Shell	435p (+15¼p)

FALLS:

Brit Biotech	107½p (-11p)
Carrs Milling	261½p (-11p)
Courts Furnish	440p (-17½p)
Norwich Union	380p (-13p)
Com Union	869p (-19p)
TI	500p (-10p)
Capital Radio	500p (-10p)
Shield Diag	735p (-12½p)
Cadbury-Schw	625p (-10½p)

Closing Prices Page 26

TEMPUS

Bumpy ride for BTR

YEARS AGO, when BTR's star was ascendant, people used to say that a diverse portfolio spread the risk. If one market or product took a tumble, you could be sure of a gain elsewhere. Today, BTR is determined to deny us roundabouts to balance the swings. Everywhere you look, there is a problem.

In its fifth profit warning in three years, sterling is the main complaint but the market should have had some understanding of the effect of translating, say Australian dollar earnings into pounds, given the 20 per cent depreciation of that currency against sterling. But the real worry is competitiveness and plummeting demand. In contrast to Siebe, which recently went bullish on Europe, BTR is seeing little recovery from the Continent and the company's £600 million of exports from the UK are struggling to make headway.

Meanwhile the strong pound is promoting import substitution, ruining the home patch. Overseas, things are bad but for different reasons. The financial collapse in Asia is ruining the consumer markets into which BTR sells. Australian transmission units are not finding buyers in the automotive industries of Korea and Indonesia. Likewise, Brazil's interest rate hike is hammering demand for new cars and BTR components.

The conclusion is that the streamlined BTR engineering group is uncompetitive, in the wrong location and selling into rotten markets. The business to be sold, packaging and laminates, will struggle to make £2.5-£3 billion and investors are left with an uninspiring rump. BTR will be loathe to cut the dividend again but with profits falling to £1 billion next year, the cover does not look comfortable.

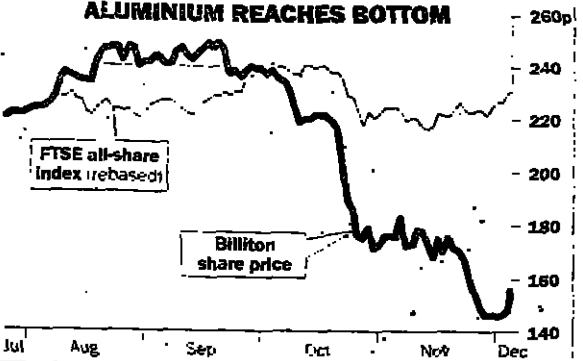
Billiton

BILLITON has been punished enough. The company's arrogance and a frothy market initially priced the stock at a premium to Rio Tinto, leader of the mining sector. Perversely, the market then sold Billiton heavily, leaving it valued at about ten times June 1999 earnings, against a multiple of 14 times for Rio Tinto.

Falling base metals prices are partly to blame but the stock market has tended to lump everything in with the weak copper price. Rio is heavily exposed to the latter metal, which suffers from the prospect of increased production from Latin America.

Aluminium's prospects are somewhat different. The metals markets have seen the aluminium price begin to decouple from the tumbling value of copper. Unlike copper, there is little new aluminium smelting capacity expected. Massive dumping of the metal by Russian producers in 1993 led to a price collapse and little investment. However, many now believe that aluminium has bottomed out at 73 cents per lb while copper has further to go. If that is the case, Billiton, which has half its assets in aluminium and an efficient new smelter in South Africa, is in a powerful position. The nagging worry is that weakness in Japan and the Far East — which account for 25 per cent of demand — will depress the price further. But even assuming nil growth from Japan, Billiton is looking cheap at these levels.

ALUMINIUM REACHES BOTTOM



London Clubs

ALAN GOODENOUGH, the head of London Clubs, thinks that his Far Eastern high-rollers are so rich that even a little local financial meltdown will not keep them out of his casinos. His confidence is engaging, but not quite convincing given the dependence on a few big-time players. Ladbroke is less sanguine and recently gave warning that some of its Far Eastern punters were being put off by the fall in Asian markets.

Yesterday's figures from London Clubs demonstrate the volatility of the gaming business. Although interim pre-tax profits dived from £19.9 million to £14.4 million on smaller win percentages, the subsequent nine weeks have seen London Clubs more than recover the ground.

The solution is to spread risk. Frustrated by the Government in its bid for Capital Corporation and impatient with the slow process of deregulation, London Clubs is forced to look abroad for diversification. Competition for foreign licences is fierce, and nailing down deals takes time, but if the Aladdin project in Las Vegas is typical, the rewards of downmarket gambling are worth waiting for.

If you can stomach the volatility, London Clubs is, on a longer view, worth backing.

Dana

THE cavalry of the West's oil industry is now thundering across the Russian steppes, with BP and Shell striking deals with big Russian oil and gas combines. Amid all the frantic activity, it is worth remembering that the industry scouts have been camping in Siberia for some time. One of these is Dana Petroleum, a diminutive oil explorer with large ambitions. Working alongside major Russian companies such as Lukoil, Yukos and Tyumen, Dana has built itself an interesting stake at the heart of the Western Siberian oilfields.

Dana has amassed a 10 per cent share in a private Siberian joint stock company, Evikhon, with interests in a number of large oilfields, including a half-share in Salym, which has reserves of about one billion barrels. Salym is subject to a joint venture with Shell, which is expected to get Russian parliamentary approval this month.

Meanwhile, Dana's takeover of Seafield last summer has given it control of a huge offshore block in Ghana which surrounds an existing gas discovery. Dana hopes to bring in Russian partners to explore the African acreage, with the quid pro quo of more deals in Siberia.

Russian oil is as much about politics as geology, and is therefore high risk, but Dana's position in Evikhon makes it an interesting bet.

EDITED BY CARL MORTISHED

COMMODITIES

LIFFE

COCOA

Dec	1025-1021	Mar	1143-1140
Mar	1052-1051	May	1152-1148
May	1073-1070	Jul	1162-1156
Jul	1094-1088	Sep	1180-1175
Sep	1104-1100		
Dec	1121-1120		Volume: 3992

ROBUSTA COFFEE ($)

Jan	1770-1766	Sep	1720-1715
Mar	1756-1755	Nov	unq
May	1730-1729	Jan	—
Jul	1720-1718		Volume: 5771

WHITE SUGAR (FOB)

Reuters		Oct	311.4-10.1
Spot: 307.7		Dec	314.4-09.0
Mar	310.1-09.7	Mar	317.4-10.0
May	315.4-14.7	May	315.0-10.0
Aug	317.2-16.5		Volume: 1415

MEAT & LIVESTOCK COMMISSION

Average fatstock prices at representative markets on December 4

p/kg lw	Pig	Sheep	Cattle
GB	62.00	94.17	92.21
(+/-)	2.40	-2.38	+1.41
Eng/Wales	62.41	95.12	91.96
(+/-)	-2.40	-2.31	+2.00
(%)	+5.0	-20.0	-21.0
Scotland	unq	89.46	93.32
(+/-)		-1.88	-1.49
(%)		-4.0	-16.0

ICIS-LOR (London 6.00pm)

CRUDE OILS ($/barrel FOB)

Brent Physical	18.85	+0.05
Brent 15 day (Jan)	18.20	+0.10
Brent 15 day (Feb)	18.25	+0.10
W Texas Intermediate (Jan)	18.75	+0.10
W Texas Intermediate (Feb)	19.00	+0.10

PRODUCTS ($/MT)

Spot CIF NW Europe (prompt delivery)

	Bid	Offer
Premium Unld	187 (+1)	190 (+1)
Gasoil EEC	170 (+1)	173 (+1)
3.5 Fuel Oil	89 (n/c)	91 (-1)
Naphtha	179 (-1)	182 (-1)

IPE FUTURES (GNI Ltd)

GAS OIL

Dec	164.50-64.75	Mar	165.25-65.50
Jan	166.00-66.25	Apr	164.50-65.00
Feb	165.75-66.00		Vol: 12262

BRENT (6.00pm)

Jan	18.13-18.14	Apr	18.13 BID
Feb	18.15 BID	May	18.13-18.20
Mar	n/a		Vol: 22145

GNI LONDON GRAIN FUTURES

LIFFE WHEAT (close £/t)

Jan	81.90
Mar	84.00
May	86.00
Jul	88.00
Sep	83.25
Volume: 654	

LIFFE BARLEY (close £/t)

Jan	75.60
Mar	78.20
May	79.45
Sep	80.50
Nov	82.50
Volume: 0	

LIFFE POTATO (£/t)

	Open	Close
Mar	unq	97.5
Apr	107.0	110.0
May	unq	120.0
		Volume: 63

RUBBER (No 1 RSS Cif p/k)

Jan 47.25-47.75

LIFFE BIFFEX (GNI Ltd $10/pt)

	High	Low	Close
Dec 97	1250	1236	1250
Jan 98	1285	1260	1285
Feb 98	unq	—	1290
Apr 98	1355	1350	1350
Vol: 78 lots		Open Interest: 1589	

Index 1200 +12

LONDON METAL EXCHANGE

(Official) (Volume prev day)	Cash	3mths	Rudolf Wolff Vol
Copper Gde A ($/tonne)	1812.0-1813.0	1842.0-1843.0	143460
Lead ($/tonne)	524.00-525.00	542.50-543.00	177750
Zinc Spec Hi Gde ($/tonne)	1109.5-1110.5	1133.0-1133.5	17779
Tin ($/tonne)	5790.0-5795.0	5650.0-5655.0	17335
Aluminium Hi Gde ($/tonne)	1566.0-1566.0	1588.0-1588.5	1735950
Nickel ($/tonne)	6010.0-6020.0	6125.0-6130.0	117816

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol
Long Gilt Previous open interest 202530	Dec 97	119-08	119-08	118-20	118-24	11063
	Mar 98	119-26	119-28	118-29	119-11	91241
German Govt Bond (Bund) Previous open interest 279875	Dec 97	104.31	104.35	104.26	104.33	24321
	Mar 98	103.72	103.73	103.23	103.47	188472
German Govt Bond (Bobl) Previous open interest 14512	Dec 97	104.04	104.06	104.03	104.06	1101
	Mar 98	103.49	103.58	103.28	103.39	3064
Italian Govt Bond (BTP) Previous open interest 110373	Mar 98	114.85	114.92	114.20	114.47	50735
	Jun 98				114.02	0
Japanese Govt Bond (JGB)	Dec 97	130.53	130.59	130.34	130.41	2447
	Mar 98	130.24	130.38	130.13	130.24	4308
Three Mth Sterling	Dec 97	92.32	92.33	92.26	92.29	13453
	Mar 98	92.29	92.29	92.25	92.25	19166
Previous open interest 801500	Jun 98	92.35	92.36	92.30	92.31	13830
Three Mth Euromark Previous open interest 1902756	Dec 97	96.21	96.24	96.21	96.22	36102
	Mar 98	96.08	96.11	96.05	96.06	73219
Three Mth Eurolira Previous open interest 571130	Dec 97	93.97	93.97	93.94	93.96	9776
	Mar 98	94.74	94.75	94.70	94.72	14771
Three Mth Euroswiss Previous open interest 164841	Dec 97	98.17	98.23	98.17	98.20	3447
	Mar 98	98.16	98.19	98.11	98.16	3775
Three Mth ECU Previous open interest 39210	Dec 97	95.47	95.47	95.44	95.46	267
	Mar 98	95.42	95.42	95.39	95.41	240
FTSE 100 Previous open interest 69413	Dec 97	5081.0	5205.0	5080.0	5189.0	14917
	Mar 98	5128.0	5247.0	5126.0	5236.5	2106

MONEY RATES (%)

Base Rates: Clearing Banks 7¼ Finance Hse 7¾

Discount Market Loans: O/night high: 7[illegible] Low 6½ Week fixed: 7[illegible]

Treasury Bills (Dis): Buy: 2 mth 7[illegible]; 3 mth 7[illegible]. Sell: 2 mth 6[illegible]; 3 mth: 6[illegible].

	1 mth	2 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
Prime Bank Bills (Dis)	7¼-7⅛	[illegible]	7⅛-7¼	7⅛-7½	
Sterling Money Rates	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Interbank	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Overnight: open 7[illegible] close 7.

	1 mth	2 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
Local Authority Deps	7⅛	n/a	7¼	7[illegible]	7[illegible]
Sterling CDs	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Dollar CDs	5.94	n/a	5.85	5.87	6.00
Building Society CDs	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

TREASURY BILLS: Applcts: £597m allotted: £100m: Bids: £98.235% received: 69%; Last week: £98.215% received: 56%; Avge rate: £7.0653% last wk £7.1330%. Next week: £100m.

EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%)

Currency	7 day	1 mth	3 mth	6 mth	Call
Dollar:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Deutschemark:	3⅛-3	3¼-3⅛	[illegible]	[illegible]	4-3
French Franc:	3½-3¼	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	3-2½
Swiss Franc:	1⅛-⅞	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1½-½
Yen:	[illegible]	¼-par	[illegible]	[illegible]	1-par

GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS (Baird & Co)

Bullion: Open $287.10-287.60 Close: $287.60-288.10 High: $288.10-288.60 Low: $286.30-286.80 AM: $287.05 PM: $287.40

Krugerrand: $296.00-298.00 (£178.00-180.00)

Platinum: $383.50 (£231.65) Silver: $5.41 (£3.255) Palladium: $207.00 (£125.05)

STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES

Mkt Rates for Dec 5	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Amsterdam	3.3186-3.3303	3.3267-3.3303	1½-1pr	3½-3pr
Brussels	60.730-60.952	60.832-60.952	24-19pr	62-55pr
Copenhagen	11.212-11.252	11.242-11.252	[illegible]pr	1-½pr
Dublin	1.1295-1.1384	1.1330-1.1370	14-8pr	44-37pr
Frankfurt	2.9455-2.9551	2.9524-2.9551	[illegible]pr	2½-2¼pr
Lisbon	300.69-301.79	301.44-301.79	[illegible]pr	2-1½pr
Madrid	248.81-249.53	249.22-249.53	60-51pr	175-158pr
Milan	2885.0-2894.8	2890.5-2894.6	44-29pr	121-100pr
Montreal	2.3507-2.3685	2.3553-2.3575	0.72-0.67pr	1.44-1.35pr
New York	1.6522-1.6648	1.6563-1.6573	0.235-0.215pr	0.728-0.697pr
Oslo	11.929-11.971	11.959-11.971	[illegible]pr	1½-1pr
Paris	9.8530-9.8881	9.8805-9.8881	3½-3¼pr	9½-9¼pr
Stockholm	12.916-12.979	12.963-12.979	[illegible]pr	[illegible]pr
Tokyo	214.50-215.69	215.48-215.69	1½-1¼pr	3½-3¼pr
Vienna	20.712-20.800	20.775-20.800	[illegible]pr	2-1½pr
Zurich	2.3743-2.3863	2.3837-2.3863	1½-1¼pr	3½-3¼pr

Source: Extel — *Premium - pr. Discount - ds.*

DOLLAR RATES

Australia	1.4900-1.4912
Austria	12.53-12.54
Belgium (Com)	36.75-36.79
Canada	1.4225-1.4230
Denmark	6.7897-6.7917
France	5.9668-5.9688
Germany	1.7845-1.7850
Hong Kong	7.7370-7.7380
Ireland	1.4568-1.4588
Italy	1747.0-1749.0
Japan	130.05-130.10
Malaysia	3.7355-3.7450
Netherlands	2.0106-2.0116
Norway	7.2250-7.2290
Portugal	182.14-182.24
Singapore	1.6140-1.6155
Spain	150.70-150.75
Sweden	7.8261-7.8357
Switzerland	1.4394-1.4404

OTHER STERLING

Argentina peso*	1.6561-1.6586
Australia dollar	2.4606-2.4658
Bahrain dinar	0.6195-0.6335
Brazil real*	1.8364-1.8409
China yuan	13.612-13.912
Cyprus pound	0.8545-0.8735
Finland markka	8.8350-8.9760
Greece drachma	457.0-467.5
Hong Kong dollar	12.780-12.7894
India rupee	63.73-65.03
Indonesia rupiah	n/a
Kuwait dinar KD	0.5010-0.5110
Malaysia ringgit	6.170-6.1897
New Zealand dollar	2.7493-2.7542
Pakistan rupee	71.60 Buy
Saudi Arabia riyal	5.9800-6.1150
Singapore dollar	2.6682-2.6731
S Africa rand (com)	8.0180-8.1870
U A E dirham	6.0350-6.1710

Barclays Treasury • Lloyds Bank

FTSE VOLUMES

3i	925	Legal & Gn	1,500
ASDA Gp	9,900	Lloyds TSB	8,700
Abbey Ntl	1,500	LucasVarity	3,700
Allnce & Leic	1,900	Marks Spr	3,600
Allied Dom	1,700	NatWst Bk	6,300
AB Foods	404	Nat Grid	3,700
BAA	3,200	Nat Power	3,700
BAT Inds	2,800	Next	1,100
BC	11,600	Norwich Un	6,100
BOC	672	Orange	1,000
BP	11,200	P & O	576
BSkyB	3,700	Pearson	869
BTR	49,900	PowerGen	1,000
BT	11,000	Prudential	3,900
Bk of Scot	2,100	RMC	302
Barclays	4,200	Railtrack	2,300
Bass	17,100	Rank Group	2,300
Billiton	5,400	Reckitt Col	486
Blue Circle	1,800	Reed Intl	2,500
Boots	600	Rentokil	2,600
BAe	1,600	Reuters	4,800
BA	5,600	Rio Tinto	2,100
British Land	1,000	Rolls Royce	1,100
Brit Steel	6,800	Royal & Sun	5,900
Cable Wire	4,300	Royal Bk Sct	1,000
Cadbury	3,600	Safeway	5,700
Carlton Cms	1,700	Sainsbury	3,100
Centrica	29,800	Schroders	61
Cm Union	1,100	Scot & New	903
Dixons	2,400	Scot Power	1,500
EMI	2,800	Svrn Trent	1,200
Energy Gp	514	Shell Trans	26,400
Enterpr Oil	2,700	Siebe	1,900
GKN	910	SmKl Bch	9,600
GRE	5,200	Smiths Inds	1,200
GUS	995	Std Chartd	1,900
Gen Acc	520	Sun Life	900
Gen Elec	10,600	TI Gp	3,300
Glaxo Well	6,100	Tesco	4,800
Granada	3,400	Thames W	464
Grand Met	14,000	Tomkins	4,400
Guinness	15,600	Unilever	3,000
HSBC	3,200	Utd Utilities	1,100
Halifax	5,600	Utd News	458
Hays	856	Vodafone	13,200
ICI	1,100	Whitbread	756
Kingfisher	1,400	Williams	1,600
LASMO	1,400	Wolseley	576
Ladbroke	2,100	Woolwich	3,900
Land Secs	1,000	Zeneca	2,800

LIFFE OPTIONS

	Series	Calls Jan	Calls Apr	Calls Jul	Puts Jan	Puts Apr	Puts Jul
[illegible]	160	16	21½	25½	3½	6	8
(*172)	180	6½	11½	15	12½	15½	17
[illegible]	1000	58½	90½	118½	50	79½	94
(*1030)	1050	37	68½	94	79	106	121½
[illegible]	750	42½	62½	79½	20	35	42½
[illegible]	800	19	41	55	47	61½	69½
[illegible]	550	26½	43	60½	13	33½	39½
[illegible]	600	9	24	38	52½	63	68
[illegible]	600	[illegible]	56½	62½	13½	24½	34
[illegible]	650	10½	27½	39½	43	52½	60½
[illegible]	600	59	74½	83	10½	27½	33
[illegible]	650	29	48½	57½	31	51½	57½
[illegible]	1500	117½	156	213½	56	94½	119
(*1561)	1600	65½	115½	164½	104½	142½	168½
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
(*365½)	1000	16	43	58½	64½	74½	89
Vodafone	390	35½	51	63½	17	27	33
(*405½)	420	21	36½	49	32	42½	48
Woolwch	300	21½	29½	34½	6	12½	16
(*312)	330	7½	15½	20½	21½	28½	32
Zeneca	1900	138½	190½	245	47	92½	101½
(*1982)	2000	86	138½	193½	89	138½	148
Prudentl	700	56	73½	91½	37½	54	63½
(*712)	750	34½	50½	68½	64½	81½	90½
Rio Tinto	750	51	65½	79½	38	60½	69½
(*751½)	800	29½	44	58½	66½	90½	99
Redland	330	16	20½	16	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
(*343½)	360	[illegible]	5½	[illegible]	16½	16½	16½
R-Royce	240	17½	25½	31½	14	21	21½
(*243½)	260	9½	16½	23	24	32	32½
Tesco	500	48	60½	71½	12	22	29
(*529½)	550	22½	34	46	34½	46	53
Utd Bsc	200	22½	26	30	4½	9	11
(*218½)	220	10½	14½	18½	11	18½	20½

	Series	Calls Feb	Calls May	Calls Aug	Puts Feb	Puts May	Puts Aug
BTR	180	15	22½	27	12½	19	22
(*180½)	200	9	15	19½	24½	31½	34½
Sun Cmc	330	33	42	44	11½	17	21½
(*346)	360	18	27	30	26	32½	36½
Br Aero	1600	141	184	226	53	82½	104½
(*1652)	1700	88½	135	175½	97½	130	152½
Br Telcm	455	28	—	—	20	—	—
(*474½)	516	9½	—	—	50½	—	—
Cadbury	600	47	52	70½	15	30½	34½
(*625½)	650	21½	37	46	41	56½	60
Energy Gp	600	46	55½	67	8½	15	14
(*640½)	650	24	29½	37½	26	33	35
Gallaher	300	38	43	47	8	14	16
(*327½)	330	20	25	30½	20½	27½	29½
GEC	390	36½	47½	57	9½	15½	24
(*413½)	420	19	31½	41	22½	28½	38

	Series	Calls Feb	Calls May	—	Puts Feb	Puts May	—
Grnd Met	550	41	53½	—	16½	32½	—
(*565)	600	22	31½	—	44	60½	—

	Series	Calls Feb	Calls May	Calls Aug	Puts Feb	Puts May	Puts Aug
Guinness	550	43	57½	65	19	30	32½
(*566½)	600	20½	34½	41½	47	57½	59
Hanson	280	26½	34½	38	7½	14	16
(*295½)	300	15½	24½	27½	16	23½	25½
Imp Tob	390	22½	33½	38½	16	22	27
(*404½)	420	10	22½	25½	34½	39	44
Kingfshr	850	61	77	93	41	61	66
(*865½)	900	39	56	70½	69	89	93½
Lasmo	260	24	33	37	8½	13	14½
(*272½)	280	13½	23½	26½	16½	22	24
Ladbroke	280	19	29	35½	12½	20½	23
(*292½)	300	10½	20½	26½	24½	31½	34
LucasVar	180	19	26½	28½	8	17½	11
(*190)	200	10	17	18½	15	21	21
P&O	650	50½	65	71½	18½	29	40
(*674)	700	24½	37½	47	48½	54½	66

	Series	Calls Dec	Calls Mar	Calls Jun	Puts Dec	Puts Mar	Puts Jun
BG PLC	283	14½	29½	34½	4	13½	17½
(*292)	306	4½	19	23½	16½	24	29
BSkyB	460	20	43½	59½	11	33½	41
(*468)	500	5	26½	41½	36½	55½	63
Br Bio	100	11	21½	25½	6½	10½	14½
(*107½)	110	5½	17	21	11½	16	19½
Centrica	90	5½	12	15½	2½	7	9½
(*93)	100	1½	7½	10½	7½	12½	15
Dixons	650	25	61	79	9	34½	44
(*665)	700	5	38	55	38½	60½	70
EMI	460	26½	51	67	6½	28	36
(*476½)	492	11	35½	—	23	44	—
Granada	850	17½	50½	68	16	43	51
(*850½)	900	2½	30	45½	51	73½	80½
GUS	700	32	62½	79½	8	30½	38½
(*722)	750	8½	38½	54½	34	56	63½
Lloyds TSB	750	27	66½	87½	14½	47	58
(*762½)	800	8½	44½	64½	45	75	85
Lonrho	80	10	14	16	½	5½	6½
(*89)	90	3½	9	11½	3½	10½	11½
Norwich	360	28½	43½	50	1½	14	17
(*386½)	390	7½	26½	34	12	26	31
Orange	250	9	22½	29½	4½	16	20
(*263½)	280	2	13½	20	17½	27	30
Railtrck	1050	55	113	140½	14½	50	61½
(*1091)	1100	28½	88½	114½	35	73½	86
Scot Pwr	500	17½	45	60½	6	26	34
(*512½)	550	½	26	38½	38	54	62½
Tarmac	110	5½	12½	14½	1½	5½	8
(*114)	120	1	8	10	7	11	13½
Tomkins	300	10½	22	30	4	14	19
(*305½)	330	1	10	18½	24½	31½	35
Unilever	475	27	49	56	2½	17½	24
(*498)	500	10½	35	42	11½	28½	35½

December 5 Total: 57847 Calls: 24480 Puts: 33367

FTSE INDEX (*5175)

Strike	Calls Dec	Calls Jan	Calls Feb	Calls Mar	Calls Jun	Puts Dec	Puts Jan	Puts Feb	Puts Mar	Puts Jun
5000	220½	278½	348½	376½	486½	27	71	109½	144½	207½
5050	177½	241½	308½	343	—	34½	84	122	162	—
5100	137½	203½	277	311½	423½	48	97½	141	180	243
5150	102½	171½	245½	279½	—	64	117½	160½	198½	—
5200	74	141	211	247½	381	86½	138½	180½	217½	281
5250	50½	112	177½	217	—	116	162½	203	239½	—
5300	32	90	152½	193½	305½	150½	193½	232	268½	329
5350	16½	68½	129½	170	—	193½	226	262	294	—

December 5 Total: 7265 Calls: 4523 Puts: 2742

*Underlying security price

WALL STREET

	Dec 5 midday	Dec 4 close
AMP Inc	45	44
AMR Corp	130½	129½
AT & T	57½	56
Abbott Labs	66½	67½
Advanced Micro	21½	20½
Aetna Life	70½	70½
Ahmanson (HF)	63½	63½
Air Prod & Chem	78	79½
AirTouch Comm	40½	40
Albertsons	47½	46½
Alcan Alumnm	28½	28½
Allied Signal	39	38½
Alum Co of Am	70½	69½
Amerada Hess	55½	54½
AEP	49½	49½
Amer Express	85½	85½
Amer Genl Corp	54½	54½
Amer Home Pr	72½	72½
Amer Intl	107½	107½
Amer Stores	20	20
Amer Standard	40	40½
Ameritech	76½	76½
Amgen	52½	52½
Amoco	86	87
Andrew Corp	24½	24½
Anheuser-Busch	43	43½
Apple Computer	15½	15½
Archer Daniel	21½	21
Armco	5	5½
Armstrg Wrld	72½	71½
Asarco	24½	24½
Atl Richfield	75	75½
Atmel Corp	20½	19½
Autm Data Pro	56½	56½
Avery Dennison	43	42½
Avon Products	58½	59½
Baker Hughes	44½	42½
Baltim Gas & El	30½	30½
Banc One	54½	54½
BankAmerica	78½	75½
Bank of NY	56½	55½
Bankers Tr NY	126	128½
Barnett Bank	71	71½
Bausch & Lomb	40½	39½
Baxter Intl	52½	52
Becton Dicknsn	51½	51½
Bell Atlantic	89½	91
BellSouth	55½	56
Black & Decker	37½	37½
Block (H&R)	43½	42½
Boeing	55½	52½
Boise Cascade	32	32
Boston Scien	40½	45
Bristol Myr Sq	95	96½
Browning Ferris	35½	35
Brunswick	31½	31½
Burlington Nthn	94½	92½
CMS Energy Corp	38½	38
CPC Intl	103	102½
CSX	54½	54½
CBS Corp	30½	32½
Campbell Soup	56½	55½
Carolina Pwr	37½	37½
Case Corp	62½	62½
Caterpillar	51	50½
Central & SW	25½	25½
Champion Intl	51½	51½
Chase Manhat	115½	116
Chevron Corp	78½	77½
Chrysler	35½	35½
Chubb Corp	73	75½
Cigna Corp	176½	176½
Citicorp	136½	135½
Clorox	79½	78½
Coastal Corp	63½	61½
Coca Cola	65½	64½
Coca-Cola Ent	33½	33½
Colgate-Palm	71½	70½
Columbia Gas	74½	74½
ColumbiaHCA	30½	30½
Compaq Comp	64½	63½
Comp Ass Intl	54½	53½
Conagra	37½	36½
Cons Edison	37½	37½
Cons Nat Gas	60½	60½
Cooper Inds	51½	51½
CoreStates	79½	79½
Corning Inc	42½	41½
Cwide Credit	42½	42½
Crestar Finl	55½	56½
Crown Cork	49½	49½
Dana Corp	45	46½
Dayton Hudson	72½	71½
Deere	55½	55½
Delta Air Lines	117½	115½
Deluxe Corp	36½	35½
Digital Equip	43½	42½
Dillard Dept St	36½	36½
Disney (Walt)	97½	97½
Dominion Res	39½	39½
Donnelley (RR)	37½	35½
Dover Corp	69½	67½
Dow Chemical	101½	101½
Dow Jones	52½	52½
Dresser	41½	40½
Duke Power	51½	51½
Dun & Brdstreet	28½	27½
Du Pont	63½	62½
Eastman Chem	59½	59½
Eastman Kodak	59½	59½
Eaton Corp	96½	95
Edison Intl	27½	27½
Elect Data Sys	41½	41½
Emerson Elec	56½	56½
Engelhard Corp	18½	18½
Enron Corp	38½	38½
Entergy	28½	28½
Ethyl Corp	6½	6½
Exxon	61½	62½
FMC Corp	72½	72½
FPL Group	55½	55½
Federal Express	66½	67½
Fifth Third Banc	79½	80
Fleet Finl Grp	71½	70½
Fluor Corp	35½	35½
Ford Motor	46½	45½
Fort James	36½	37
Fortune Brands	35	35½
Franklin Res	95½	96½
GTE Corp	49½	49½
Gannett	61½	59½
Gap Inc Del	56½	55½
Gateway 2000	26½	27½
Gen Dynamics	86½	86½
Gen Electric	73½	72½
Gen Mill	75½	75½
Gen Motors	62½	61½
Gen Reinsurance	210½	209½
Gen Signal	40½	40½
Genuine Parts	32½	32½
Georgia Pac	82½	83½
Gillette	96½	95½
Glaxo Wellc ADR	46½	46½
Goodrich (BF)	44½	44
Goodyear Tire	66½	65½
Great Lakes	46½	44
Halliburton	55½	54
Harcourt General	54½	54½
Heinz (HJ)	54½	54½
Hercules	50½	49½
Hershey Foods	61½	62
Hewlett Packard	65½	65½
Hilton Hotels	31½	31½
Home Depot	59½	59
Homestake Mng	[illegible]	[illegible]
Honeywell	70½	69½
Household Intl	127½	127
Houston Ind	23½	23½
Humana	21	21½
ITT Corp	76½	78½
Ikon Office	31½	31½
Illinois Tool	55½	54½
Illinova	24½	24½
INCO	18½	18½
Ingersoll Rand	42½	41½
Inland Steel	16½	16½
Intel Corp	77½	76½
IBM	107½	106½
Intl Flav & Fr	51½	50½
Intl Paper	46½	46½
Jhnsn & Jhnsn	64½	64½
Kellogg	47½	47½
Kerr-McGee	65½	66
Kimberly-Clark	51½	51½
Kmart	12½	12½
Knight-Ridder	51½	51½
Lilly (Eli)	66½	66½
Limited Inc	24½	24½
Lincoln Nat	75½	76½
Litton	51	51
Liz Claiborne	46½	46½
Lockheed Martin	95½	95½
Louisiana Pac	20½	20½
MCI Comm	44½	44½
Manpower Inc	35½	35½
Marriott Int	72	72½
Marsh & McLen	75½	75
Masco Corp	49½	49½
May Dept St	56½	55½
Maytag Corp	34½	37½
McDonalds	47½	47½
McGraw Hill	66½	66½
Mead Corp	29½	30½
Medtrust Corp	36½	36½
Medtronic	51½	51½
Mellon Bk	57½	57½
Merck Inc	103½	103½
Mercury Fin	[illegible]	[illegible]
Merrill Lynch	74½	75½
Microsoft	142½	142½
Minnesota Mine	90½	90½
Mirage Resorts	23½	23½
Mobil Corp	73½	71½
Monsanto	44½	43½
Morgan (JP)	123½	122½
Motorola Inc	62½	62½
Mylan Labs	22½	22½
Nat Semi	29½	29½
Natl Service Ind	47½	46½
Navistar Int	26½	26½
NY Times A	60½	60½
Newmont Mng	28½	27½
Nike B	42½	46½
NL Industries	16½	17
Nordstrom	60½	61½
Norfolk Sthrn	31½	31
Nthn State Pwr	54½	54½
Norwest Corp	36½	37½
Occidental Pet	30½	29½
Oracle	31½	30½
Oryx Energy Co	25½	25½
Owens Corning	37	37½
PPG Industries	58½	57½
PMI Group	67½	65½
PNC Bank	57	57½
PP&L Res	22½	23½
Paccar Inc	55½	56½
Pacificorp	24½	24
Pac Enterprise	35½	35½
Pall Corp	21½	21½
Parker Hannifin	49½	46½
Peco Energy	24½	24½
Penney (JC)	64½	64½
Pennzoil	66½	64½
Pepsico	37½	37½
Pfizer	75½	76½
Pharm & Upjhn	36½	36½
Phelps Dodge	66½	65
Philip Morris	45½	44½
Phillips Pet	50	49½
Pitney Bowes	85½	84½
Polaroid	45½	44
Procter & Gmbl	80½	79½
Providian	45½	45½
Pub Serv E & G	29½	29
Quaker Oats	52	52
Ralston Purina	94	94½
Raychem Corp	45½	45½
Raytheon	55	54½
Reebok Intl	34	35½
Reliastar Fin	77½	77½
Reynolds Metals	60½	59½
Rockwell Intl	56½	49½
Rohm & Haas	92½	91½
Royal Dutch	55½	55½
Rubbermaid	24½	24½
SBC Comms	72½	72½
Safeco Corp	50	50½
St Paul's Cos	83½	82½
Sara Lee Corp	52½	52½
Schering Plough	61½	61½
Schlumberger	87½	82½
Seagram	32	32
Sears Roebuck	47½	46½
Shell Trans	43	41
Sherwin Wllms	29½	29½
Silicon Graphic	15½	14½
Snap-on-Tools	44½	44½
Southern Co	25	25½
Southtrust	59½	56½
Sprint Corp	56	57½
Stanley Works	45½	45½
Sun Company	41½	40½
Sun Micrsys	41½	40½
Suntrust	73½	73½
Supervalu	36½	36½
Synovus Fin	32½	32½
Sysco Corp	44½	44½
TRW Inc	55½	55½
TIG Hldgs	33½	33½
Tandy Corp	42½	42½
Temple Inland	54½	54½
Tenet Healthcare	33½	33½
Tenneco	43½	44½
Texaco	54½	54½
Texas Inst	45½	44½
Texas Utilities	39½	40
Textron	61	61½
Thermo Elect	37	36½
Time Warner	57½	58
Times-Mirror A	59½	59½
Timken	36½	36½
Torchmark	41½	41½
Toys R Us	35½	35½
Transamerica	111½	111½
Travelers	55½	56½
Tribune	58½	59½
UST Inc	32½	32½
US Bancorp	112	111½
UAL	91½	91½
Unitrin	62	62
US Inds	28½	28
US West Comm	45½	44½
US West Media	30½	30½
USAirways Group	60½	60½
USX Marathon	35½	35½
Unicom	30½	30½
Unilever NV	62½	62½
Union Camp	57½	57½
Union Carbide	46½	46
Union Pacific	63½	62½
Unisys Corp	14½	13½
USF&G Corp	21½	21½
United Tech	75½	75½
Unocal Corp	39½	38½
VF Corp	46½	46½
Wal-Mart Stores	40½	41½
Warner-Lambert	116½	116½
Waste Mngmt	26½	25½
Wells Fargo	330½	332½
Weyerhaeuser	49½	49½
Whirlpool	56½	56
Whitman	25½	25½
Winn Dixie	41½	41½
Witco Corp	44½	44½
Woolworth	21½	22½
Wrigley (Wm) Jr	81	81½
Xerox	77½	76½
Xilinx Inc	36½	36½

THE TIMES TODAY

SATURDAY DECEMBER 6 1997

NEWS

Newborn baby taken from mother

■ A three-hour-old baby was snatched from her cot at her sleeping mother's side in a modern hospital maternity ward by a woman who managed to evade its elaborate security system. The 6lb 15oz girl, Karli, was born by caesarian section at 9.50am and her father, Karl Hawthorne, was telephoning relatives to break the news when she was snatched from Basildon General Hospital, Essex at 12.50pm .... Pages 1, 2

Robinson to face watchdog inquiry

■ The Parliamentary standards watchdog is to investigate whether Geoffrey Robinson, the Paymaster General, should have declared a multimillion-pound offshore trust in the Commons Register of Members' Interests........ Pages 1, 4

Life sentence

A senior RAF officer who murdered his wife over his infatuation with a young Serbian interpreter bagan a life sentence.....Pages 1, 3

Pedal power

MPs are to get pedalling, with the introduction of an allowance for using their bicycles in the course of parliamentary duties .... Page 5

Killer rapist

A rape victim aged 9 was murdered after she told her attacker that she was going to tell her mother........ Page 7

Vitamin battle

Acampaign has been launched by thousands of women who take the vitamin B6 after the Government announced plans to ban the supplement .... Page 9

Football mania

Since Iran's underdogs drew with Scotland in 1978, only the blind or foolish dismiss their football, says Rob Hughes........ Page 11

Prison love

Love will bloom in French prisons under a plan to build mini-apartments for congugal visits Page 13

Mrs Mandela setback

The ambitions of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela face a big setback this weekend when the African National Congress Women's League is expected to withdraw its support........ Page 14

Bomber jailed

An animal-rights bomber who carried out arson attacks on stores across the South of England was jailed for 18 years........Page 15

Victim of success

Superintendent Mallon must wonder whether he is yet another high-profile policeman who is a victim of his own success Page 16

Armagh landmark

In the heart of the bandit country of South Armagh stands one of the most lavishly-funded Anglican churches in the UK........ Page 18

Spirit of Christmas past

■ An artist commissioned to create the annual Christmas tree for the Tate Gallery in London has displayed a large bin filled to the brim with rubbish — leftovers: empty bottles, drink cans, used Christmas paper, broken decorations, the packaging from toys, gifts or food products and dead trees........ Page 1

ANDRÉ CAMARA

Philip Lader, the new American Ambassador, with one of the horses drawing his state landau, on the way to present his credentials to the Queen

NEWS FEATURES

Valerie Grove: Take off your coat and hat," says Gerald Kaufman "and leave your worries on the doorstep." He wears an insouciant air for one who has put a bomb under Covent Garden .... Page 21

Feminism: The author of the Hite reports on female and male sexuality is now 55 and has produced a book on female behaviour which is likely to be as controversial as its predecessors........ Page 19

Arts crisis: The arts world is infamous for declaring itself in crisis. This time Matilda may be burning........ Page 20

OPINION

Truth and trial: Winnie Mandela has finally faced what passes for the wrath of Desmond Tutu. But the process will ultimately produce neither the truth nor reconciliation........Page 23

Spires: Some of the best news that London has had for a long time is that Sir Christopher Wren's City churches have been saved by the Church of England ..Page 23

LETTERS

Sir Jeremy Isaacs; opera's future; euthanasia: English cuisine........ Page 23

COLUMNS

Simon Jenkins: who would have thought that Labour's jails would be filled with foxhunting racing drivers, arrested on illegal doorsteps with steaks?........ Page 22

Alan Borg: Too much of the recent debate over museum admission charges has given the impression of being concerned with papering over of funding cracks........Page 22

OBITUARIES

The Ven G. B. Timms; Annie Lindsell, campaigner for voluntary euthanasia; John Elwyn, painter........ Page 25

BUSINESS

BTR: Shares fell more than 12 per cent after the company made its fifth profits warning since September 1994Page 27

Casinos: London Clubs International moved a step closer to becoming the first British company to enter the world's most famous gaming market after securing a stake in a major development in Las Vegas........ Page 27

Markets: The FTSE 100 rose 60.6 to 5142.9. The sterling index fell to 104.3 after falling from $1.6762 to $1.6563 and falling from DM2.9670 to DM2.9532........ Page 31

SPORT

Football: England may play Chile in place of Colombia, against whom they have been drawn in the World Cup..... Page 37

Rugby union: The optimism that rose with Clive Woodward's first selection as England coach has been tempered ..... Page 41

Tennis: John McEnroe beat Bjorn Borg on a tiebreak in their first match in Britain since 1981 Wimledon........ Page 35

Cricket: Devon Malcolm moved from Derbyshire to Northants........ Page 42

SECTIONS

MAGAZINE

Life: Doctors seeing off today's killers........ Page 8

007: On set with the new man........ Page 19

Intifada: Was the sacrifice worth it........ Page 26

Fashion: Versace as an art icon .... Page 38

Wine: Jane MacQuitty's favourite choice bottles under £20........ Page 57

[illegible]

Interview: With Ian McCulloch .... Page 6

Comedy: Chewing the fat with Paul Whitehouse .. 10

Books: 10-page guide for Christmas........ Page 16

Films:........ Pages 9, 49

Win one of 60 Eddie Izzard videos........ Page 4

Music:........ Pages 12-15

Shopping: .... Pages 26, 27

WEEKEND

Life's a drag: Riding with the Prince of Wales's first drag hunt .... Pages 1, 2

Property: prices; David Linley's house; B&B accommodation.... Pages 8-10

Country life: Training the world's largest eagle for TV .... Page 19

Travel: Mexico; Syria; Morocco; Hull .....Pages 23-31

Vision

Full seven-day guide to television and radio

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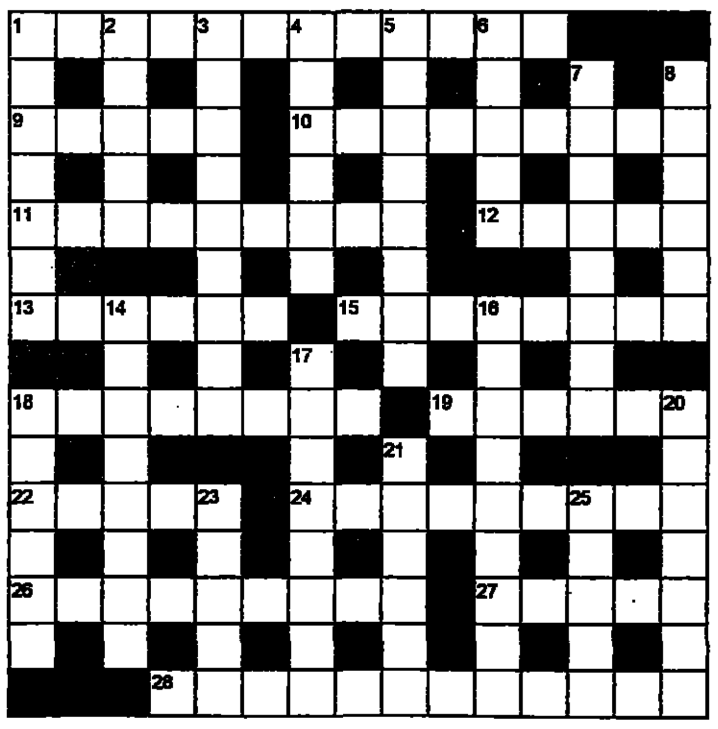
THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,656

A £20 book token will be awarded to the senders of the first five correct solutions opened next Thursday. Entries should be addressed to: The Times, Saturday Crossword Competition, PO Box 486, Virginia Street, London E1 9DD. The names of the winners and the solution will be published next Saturday.

Name/Address ....

....

....



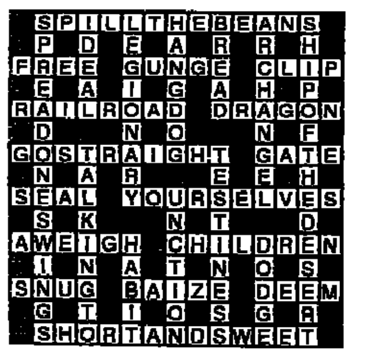
ACROSS

1 No term for this computer instruction? (6,6).
9 Physician not using crates to take large animal (5).
10 Band leader in haste to become a big name (9).
11 One who keeps an eye on other people's deliveries (3-6).
12 River featured in dramatic retreat (5).
13 Illegal enterprise bringing outcry (6).
15 Flew thus after take-off (8).
18 Open University about to make an offer (8).
19 Second vehicle, a black Beetle (6).
22 Finally got a head to provide lessons (5).
24 Good plump porker that has its day in America (9).
26 Vaulted chambers containing legal colleagues? (9).
27 French white wine not opened for these wild parties (5).
28 Old German in moving scene gives Christmas present (12).

DOWN

1 Academy member holding an exhibition, perhaps (7).
2 Clean little dog? (3,2).
3 Let me open convertible and escape with lover (9).
4 Church many in diocese leave (6).
5 Term embracing Italian for "mirth" (8).
6 Gold piece enough for round-the-world trip (5).
7 One who replaces the locks after loss of crown? (3-5).
8 Covered both sides of river by mounting mule, say (6).
14 Deep split in original creation of Versace's (8).
16 Weirdo removed from the centre (9).
17 Thus enliven so-called Doctor's place (8).
18 Play better than first pair in our judgment (6).
20 Sugar cane pulp producing methane, say, in home (7).
21 Art of making woods for indoor bowls? (6).
23 Poet's house by the sea in France (5).
25 Sanctuary sought from fiendish avenger (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,650



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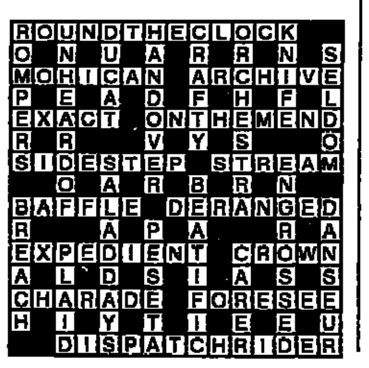

LAST WEEK'S WINNERS: *S J Palmer, Holmes Chapel, Cheshire; G Sivlter, Long Ashton, Bristol; W G Anderson, Basingstoke, Hants; A C Smith, London N6; B J Swain, Sidcup, Kent.*

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HOURS OF DARKNESS

TODAY

Sun rises:	Sun sets:
7.50 am	3.53 pm
Moon sets	Moon rises
11.10 pm	12.11 pm

First quarter tomorrow

London 3.53 pm to 7.52 am
Bristol 4.03 pm to 8.01 am
Edinburgh 3.40 pm to 8.29 am
Manchester 3.51 pm to 8.10 am
Penzance 4.21 pm to 8.07 am

TOMORROW

Sun rises:	Sun sets:
7.52 am	3.52 pm
Moon sets	Moon rises
-	12.40 pm

First quarter today

London 3.52 pm to 7.53 am
Bristol 4.02 pm to 8.02 am
Edinburgh 3.40 pm to 8.30 am
Manchester 3.50 pm to 8.11 am
Penzance 4.20 pm to 8.08 am

HIGH TIDES

TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT
London Bridge	05.32	6.6	18.10	6.6
Aberdeen	05.32	3.9	17.40	3.9
Avonmouth	11.11	11.8	23.38	11.4
Belfast	02.59	3.2	15.14	3.4
Cardiff	10.57	10.9	23.24	10.6
Devonport	09.24	5.1	21.57	4.8
Dover	02.45	6.2	15.15	6.0
Dublin (N Wall)	03.48	3.7	16.00	3.9
Falmouth	08.55	4.9	21.28	4.6
Greenock	04.24	3.3	16.39	3.5
Harwich	03.30	3.8	16.06	3.8
Holyhead	02.15	5.0	14.38	5.2
Hull (Albert D)	10.21	7.8	22.33	8.0
Ilfracombe	10.03	8.2	22.31	7.9
King's Lynn	10.30	5.8	22.40	6.0
Leith	06.45	5.1	19.03	5.1
Liverpool	02.59	8.4	15.26	8.6
Lowestoft	00.58	2.4	13.57	2.3
Margate	03.39	4.5	16.18	4.4
Milford Haven	10.18	6.2	22.48	5.9
Newquay	09.15	6.3	21.46	5.9
Oban	09.47	3.6	22.01	3.2
Penzance	08.42	5.1	21.12	4.8
Portland	10.45	1.8	23.25	1.6
Portsmouth	03.22	4.5	15.33	4.3
Shoreham	02.57	5.8	15.24	5.6
Southampton	02.35	4.2	14.56	4.2
Swansea	10.22	8.5	22.55	8.1
Tees	07.56	4.8	20.08	4.9
Walton-on-N	03.23	3.9	16.03	3.9

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday: Highest day temp: Barra, Outer Hebrides, 11C (52F); lowest day max: Little Rissington, Gloucestershire, 2C (36F); highest rainfall: Aultbea, Highland, 1.46in; highest sunshine: Weymouth, Dorset, 7.0hr

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING
Recycled paper made up 43.6% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the second half of 1996

FORECAST

☐ **General**: northern and western Scotland will have dull, damp day, with occasional rain and extensive hill fog. Eastern Scotland will also be cloudy but there will be some drier interludes. Northern Ireland will be mostly dull, with sprinkles of light rain or drizzle, chiefly in the west. England and Wales will be generally overcast but mostly dry. It will be mild but rather breezy with strong southwesterly winds in many northern and western areas.

☐ **London, SE England, Central S England, E Midlands, W Midlands, Channel Isles, Central N England**: mostly cloudy with spots of drizzle. Wind fresh, southwest. Max 11C (52F).

☐ **E Anglia, E England, N E England**: overcast with light rain, becoming drier later. Fresh southwest breeze. Max 11C (52F).

☐ **SW England, S Wales, N Wales, NW England, Lake District, Isle of Man, N Ireland**: cloudy with spots of rain. Drier and perhaps a little brighter in the lee of hills. Strong southwest breeze. Max temp 12C (54F).

☐ **SW Scotland, Glasgow, Central Highlands, Argyll, NW Scotland, Orkney, Shetland**: dull with outbreaks of rain. Extensive hill and coastal fog. Strong to gale force southwest wind. Max 12C (54F).

☐ **Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, Moray Firth, NE Scotland**: cloudy with outbreaks of light rain, but some drier periods. Strong southwest wind. Max 12C (54F).

☐ **Republic of Ireland**: cloudy with rain or drizzle in the North and West. Brighter inland later. Max 11C (52F).

☐ **Outlook**: some rain in the West, but it will stay mostly dry in the East. It will continue mild but breezy.

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

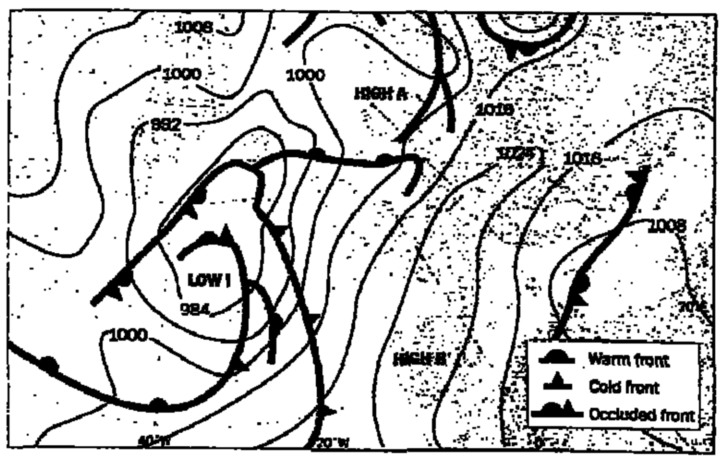
24 hrs to 5 pm: b=bright; c=cloud; d=drizzle; ds=dust storm; du=dull; f=fair; fg=fog; g=gale; h=hail; r=rain; sh=shower; sl=sleet; sn=snow; s=sun; t=thunder

	Sun hrs	Rain in	Max C	Max F	
Aberdeen	-	0.01	9	48	c
Anglesey	0.8	0.01	10	50	c
Aspatria	-	0.06	8	46	r
Aviemore	-	0.02	8	46	r
Belfast	-	0.02	7	45	r
Birmingham	-	-	5	41	b
Bognor R	4.3	-	4	39	s
Bournem'th	4.1	-	7	45	s
Bristol	4.7	-	8	46	s
Buxton	-	-	5	41	du
Cardiff	4.1	-	8	46	b
Clacton	3.9	0.01	5	41	b
Cleethorpes	1.4	-	5	41	c
Colwyn Bay	-	0.01	10	50	c
Cromer	2.9	-	6	43	b
Dunbar	X				
Eastbourne	X				
Edinburgh	X				
Eskdalemuir	-	0.01	6	43	du
Exmouth	6.0	-	8	46	s
Falmouth	6.8	-	11	52	s
Fishguard	0.1	-	8	46	c
Folkestone	3.9	-	7	45	s
Glasgow	-	0.08	8	46	r
Guernsey	-	0.01	9	48	c
Hastings	4.1	-	8	46	s
Hayling I.	5.1	-	7	45	s
Herne Bay	X				
Hove	2.9	-	8	46	b
Hunstanton	X	-	5	41	c
Isle-of-man	-	-	10	50	c
Isle-of-wight	5.6	0.01	7	45	s
Jersey	6.4	0.03	7	45	s
Kinloss	-	0.01	11	52	r
Leeds	0.1	-	6	43	c
Lerwick	-	0.38	10	50	sh
Leuchars	-	-	8	46	c
Littlehmptn	3.0	-	6	43	b
London	3.8	-	7	45	s
Lowestoft	1.5	0.02	5	41	c
Manchester	-	-	6	43	b
Margate	3.7	0.15	7	45	s
Minehead	6.0	-	6	43	s
Morecambe	-	0.01	9	48	du
Newcastle	0.5	-	9	48	b
Newquay	X				
Norwich	2.4	-	5	41	b
Oxford	X				
Penzance	X	0.01	11	52	s
Poole	5.3	-	7	45	s
Prestatyn	X				
Ross-o-wye	2.3	-	7	45	s
Salcombe	X				
Saunton Snd	2.4	-	9	48	s
Scarboro'	1.8	-	5	41	b
Shrewsbury	-	0.01	7	45	b
Skegness	1.4	-	5	41	c
Southend	3.0	0.01	6	43	b
Southport	X				
Southsea	6.6	0.01	8	46	s
Stornoway	-	0.66	10	50	r
Swanage	6.8	-	8	46	s
Teignmouth	6.3	-	7	45	s
Tenby	2.7	-	10	50	b
Tiree	-	0.40	11	52	r
Torquay	6.9	-	10	50	s
Tynemouth	X				
West-s-mare	5.0	-	6	43	s
Weymouth	7.0	-	9	48	s

ABROAD

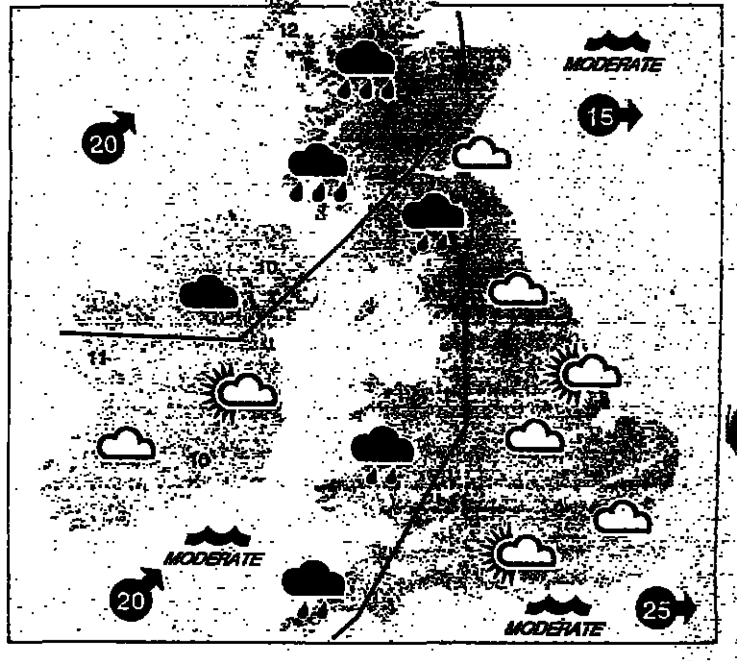
Ajaccio	12	54	f
Akrotiri	19	66	f
Alex'dria	22	72	s
Algiers	15	59	f
Amst'dm	3	37	c
Athens	18	64	f
B Aires	24	75	s
Bahrain	21	70	f
Bangkok	31	88	s
Barbados	X	X	X
Barcelona	7	45	r
Beirut	19	66	f
Belgrade	2	36	c
Berlin	2	36	c
Bermuda	21	70	f
Biarritz	3	37	s
Borde'x	5	41	f
Brussels	3	37	c
Budapest	4	39	f
Cairo	22	72	s
Cape Tn	23	73	s
Ch'church	X	X	X
Chicago	0	32	s
Cologne	3	37	c
Corfu	14	57	c
C'phagn	-2	28	c
Dublin	2	36	c
Dubrovnik	12	54	s
Faro	17	63	f
Florence	X	X	X
Frankfurt	2	36	c
Funchal	18	64	r
Geneva	1	34	c
Gibraltar	15	59	f
Helsinki	-9	16	sn
Hong K	18	64	s
Innsbrck	1	34	c
Istanbul	14	57	f
Jeddah	29	84	s
Jo'burg	23	73	f
L Angels	18	64	s
L Palmas	22	72	f
Le Touquet	2	36	s
Lisbon	14	57	s
Locarno	6	43	c
Luxembg	0	32	c
Luxor	24	75	s
Madrid	5	41	f
Majorca	11	52	r
Malaga	14	57	d
Malta	X	X	X
Melb'rne	17	63	f
Mexico C	X	X	X
Miami	22	72	r
Milan	X	X	X
Montreal	-2	28	-
Moscow	-5	23	sn
Munich	-1	30	c
N Delhi	20	68	s
N York	9	48	f
Nairobi	23	73	c
Naples	X	X	X
Nice	11	52	f
Oslo	-7	19	s
Paris	1	34	c
Peking	2	36	s
Perth	25	77	f
Prague	1	34	f
Reykjavik	2	36	f
Rhodes	18	64	c
Rio de J	25	77	f
Riyadh	21	70	s
Rome	X	X	X
S Fr'isco	13	55	f
S Paulo	X	X	X
Salzburg	1	34	c
Santiago	28	82	s
Seoul	5	41	f
Sing'por	31	88	f
St'kholm	-7	19	s
Strasb'rg	1	34	c
Sydney	24	75	f
Tangier	14	57	c
Tel Aviv	X	X	X
Tenerife	22	72	s
Tokyo	9	48	s
Toronto	3	37	c
Tunis	15	59	f
Valencia	8	46	r
Vanc'ver	7	45	s
Venice	X	X	X
Vienna	5	41	f
Warsaw	-1	30	sn
Wash'ton	14	57	f
Well'ngton	17	63	X
Zurich	0	32	c

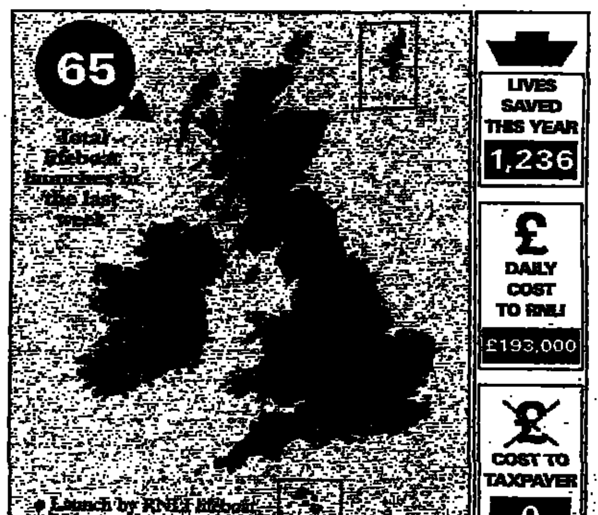
Temperatures at midday local time on Thursday X = not available



Changes to the chart above from noon: highs A and B will collapse slowly; composite I will drift northeastwards

NOON TODAY





Regional rescue update

☐ North-East – 26/11/97
In force 5 winds and heavy seas, the Whitby lifeboat launches to assist the crew of the fishing boat *Pride and Joy*, which has a tarpaulin caught around its propeller and rudder. They take the vessel in tow, and bring her and the three men aboard safely into harbour.

☐ South-East – 24/11/97
The crew of the Bembridge lifeboat stands by to rescue the crew of the oil tanker *Nordfahrer* – packed with 28,000 tonnes of jet fuel – following a collision in the Channel that has caused a crack in her fuel tanks.

☐ Scotland – 29/11/97
The crew of the Mallaig lifeboat rushes to join the search for the fishing boat *Kelly Marena* after a satellite distress signal is received by the coastguard. After a search in the early hours, the lifeboatmen sight a red flare, and race to recover the vessel's three crewmen who have taken to a liferaft after their boat sank.

Lifeboats
Royal National Lifeboat Institution
Reg. Charity No. 209603
West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset BH15 1HZ

هكذا من الأصل

FEATURE

Mad decorators who are crazy for yule

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THE TIMES
WEEKEND

SATURDAY DECEMBER 6 1997

Highgrove sets the course for happy hunting

Lin Jenkins rides with Prince Charles's first drag hunt at his home in Gloucestershire

My invitation was to join the first *ever hunt over the* Prince of Wales's land at Highgrove which did not intend to kill a fox.

Since etiquette in matters hunting is considered all, it is safe to assume the invitation did not extend to leaving a hole the size of a horse in a well-manicured hedge. Whether the heir to the throne witnessed the wanton destruction to his estate as horse and rider badly misjudged the 5ft hedge, plummeted down the drop on the far side and crumpled into the drainage ditch, I will never *know*.

My eyes were shut. All efforts were concentrated on staying on board and not leaving the imprint of my ample rump in the Highgrove mud as the horse scrambled to stay upright.

The Prince might well have been watching. Those in the field on better mannered mounts than mine told me that his custom is to join a hunt when mounted, when hounds and huntsmen are at work deep in the countryside, not at the meet in full public view.

However, that day a newspaper had suggested that Prince Charles was to abandon *foxhunting* as a result of the public mood which culminated in last week's vote in the House of Commons supporting a ban. Many riders suggested that he wasn't prepared to lend the *theory* credibility by joining the drag hunt over his own farm — the sport involves a runner laying a trail by dragging a cloth saturated in a foul-smelling concoction of aniseed, liquid paraffin and other ingredients.

Some of the field, drawn from at least eight packs around the country, offered *another explanation*: "The jumps are too big for him and the pace too fast," suggested one. "He values his safety." Another, mounted on a large bay, said: "He has probably been told we are reckless and he'd get knocked off."

Others expressed similar sentiments in more colourful language. And, as the relentless series of hedges, drystone walls, post and rail fences and five-bar gates landed several of the experienced riders in the mud, the theory could have been near to the *truth*.

Highgrove estate, where the Gloucestershire pasture is lined with trimmed hedges and well-maintained drystone walls, provides spectacular riding.

Conditions were good for the scent, and the hounds followed noisily across the countryside, kept in check by the huntsmen and two whippers-in while the field master and master of the pack looked after the mounted field. The difference here was that there was no fox to chase — just the scent of a smelly rag laid by a runner on a pre-determined "line".

Critics and purists dismiss drag hunting as contrived, and say it is nothing more than a group cross-country ride which lacks the suspense of foxhunting.

But, as my horse Toffee, a 14-year-old gelding hardened by several seasons with the Royal Military Academy and Staff College Sandhurst Drag Hunt, approached the first drystone wall we had ever encountered, our fear was far from

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> 'The Prince is moving with public opinion'

DAVID HARTLEY/REX

Prince Charles's support for drag hunting is a boost for the sport, which is likely to be the only permissible method of hunting in the new millennium

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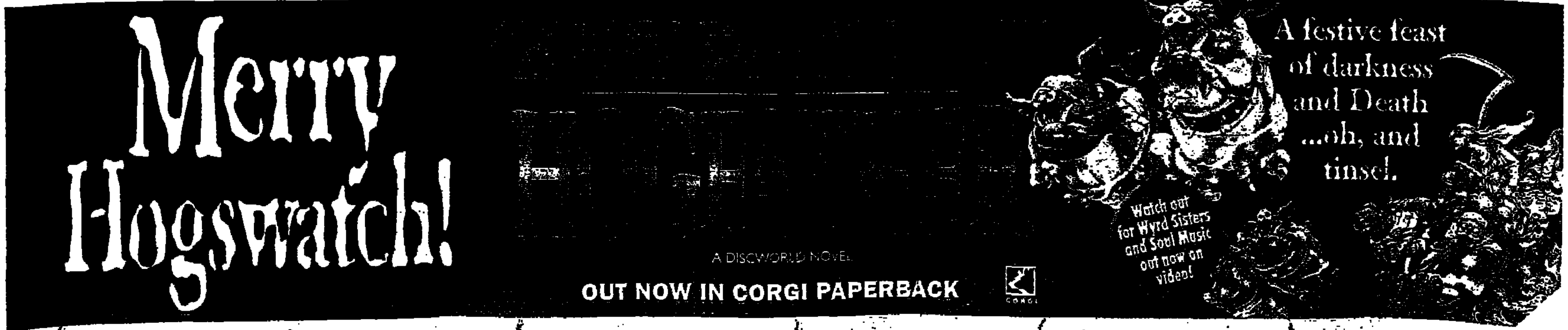

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Rural folk have lost buses, jobs and schools, says **Jonathan Young**. Leave them farming and field sports

Lord preserve us from the Snells

As the Rural Development Commission pointed out this week, the countryside is full of stress. In reality, those thatched cottages now have a steady stream of cars roaring past. Some of them are tourists, but the majority are driven by locals. They have no choice since the bus system has collapsed and the local shops and services — the butcher, the baker, the overdraft-maker — have long been "rationalised" and "translocated" into the nearest big town.

That is not what really causes the stress, though. What makes the countryside tense is the colonial spirit of those who move into it. They arrive with the National Trust tea-towel image and find all sorts of unmitigated ghastliness: combine harvesters chuntering through the night bringing in the wheat before the forecast downpour; ponies leaving steaming piles in front of Rainbow Cottage ... And then there are the locals.

They are a huge disappointment to those nurtured on the rural idyll. The modern ploughman is just not properly gnarled. Where is the knackered flat cap, binder-twine belt and rich cider-wrought accent?

Why does he sport a mid-1980s Botham haircut, drink Carlsberg Special and drive a Toyota pick-up at 60mph with ZZ Top at full thrust? He is not even, in that illuminating Home Counties phrase, a PLU — a Person Like Us.

In my home village there was no such distinction. You were born there, and accepted. Of course, you had to be careful. The fireman's annual ball inevitably ended up in one enormous brawl, and you had to be certain of the back-up team from your local pub. But this was a local rivalry based on drinking habits and the ability to finish on double top after four pints of farmhouse cider. Whatever your background, you were country people with a shared set of values.

To qualify as a proper PLU, a common outlook is unnecessary; all you need is a similar income. The church, the village hall and the pub do a noble job in bringing everyone together, especially at Christmas when there is a genuine sense of goodwill to all men. But at other times, the three classic institutions of village life struggle hard to span the gap between those whose loyalties lie with four bedrooms and a Smallbone kitchen, and those whose affinities are with their county and its soil.

Despite the differences, village life is usually a paragon of that uniquely English virtue — minding your own business. It is political interference over beef and field sports that have set the village tectonic plates crunching.

Townies can be disappointed with rural life. Local shops have gone, and local folk drive Toyotas

When the Agriculture Minister announced that beef could not be eaten on the bone, the proper PLUs were not affected. They had already decided that cows were for mooing, calves were for stroking and that any meat from same should be transported in lead-lined boxes and incinerated — but not anywhere near them.

In the remaining rural strongholds we listened to the news that the new measure would remove the risk from the six cattle that might be dodgy — six, for God's sake — and vowed we would not see the nation's beef farmers slide towards bankruptcy. We would eat beef like John Bull on double rations.

On field sports, country people try to be as robust, but it's becoming increasingly wearisome, given the wholesale ignorance of the facts. This week I heard two ladies in a market-town bookshop denouncing a local "disgrace".

"I saw this man wandering around the grounds with a gun and then he strung up a pile of rabbits, all bleeding. Of course, I reported him," she finished triumphantly. How do you explain that to someone so far removed from their rural roots that rabbits must be shot, and must be paunched — gutted — immediately if the flesh is not to be tainted?

What do you say to your neighbour at the dining-table who pours moral outrage over you for pheasant shooting while demolishing steamed breast of battery-farmed chook?

Where I grew up, every boy had a catapult or an airgun, and most of us graduated to a gun. We shot the local foreshore for duck, and we were the only people there in the snow-filled drizzle of a January day. Then the RSPB moved in, bought the foreshore, and the small lane leading to it is now crammed with birdwatchers' cars. A wild place has become a leisure area. Yet most of the newcomers are all too delighted with the change, and will be deeply satisfied that hunting is endangered.

They should be wary of voicing this in the wrong company. The People Not Like Us are becoming angered by the urban arrogance. They argue that the law should not be manipulated to oppress minorities, that women were right to use extra-parliamentary action to get the vote, that gays were right to fight for their civil liberties.

There is a popular apocryphal story which is currently doing the rounds. A Forestry Commission spokesman is explaining to a group of Welsh farmers why the Commission will not be controlling foxes in future nor allowing hunting on its land. He can hardly hear himself speak because each farmer is banging a box of Swan Vesta on the table in silent threat as to what might happen to his trees.

Collecting porcelain models of those exquisite wattle-and-daub buildings that still make up most of the villages in my home county, Devon, might seem a perfectly innocent hobby.

But it is this over-romanticised view of rural life which is contributing to social unease, being part of the gingham-patterned distortion of the true nature of the countryside.

Townie Blair, as he is now known in rural areas, needs to diffuse the situation. Country people have lost their transport, their schools, their post offices, their jobs. But destroy farming and field sports, and you take away their hearts and souls.

The newcomers will then find that the countryside is not so much stressful, as downright hostile.

● *The author is editor of* The Field

Continued from page 1

fabricated. A horse some way in front misjudged the take-off and crashed chest first into the wall, sending his rider sailing over the top.

It was not a comforting sight. Somebody had told us that the walls needed to be "showjumped". This means approaching them at a slower pace and with more precision than you would do a hedge — at which you gallop so as to clear the ditch lurking behind it.

A hedge will yield if a horse hits it; wooden gates normally break under the weight of a hunter. But a wall is rock solid. And, with just three strides to go before we hit this Highgrove speciality, I still wasn't getting my message across to Toffee: "Slow down — for both our sakes."

With a second to go, he finally responded to my desperate efforts and, sitting back on his hocks, cleared the wall in fine style. Then we were on to the next, and the next — even when the afternoon sun was so low in the sky that we could not see where we were going. The compelling intensity of the jumps made up for any lack of suspense in the absence of the fox.

The advantage of drag hunting is that the trail is planned to take in the best hedges, making for a more exhilarating time

The pattern of drag hunting emulates that of pursuing a fox. But when a false scent is laid and the most exciting jumps are pre-selected, the sport becomes faster, more furious and more frightening than a foxhunt. It is no more than a barely controlled bolt, interrupted by a succession of massive obstacles. Even though Highgrove lies in Beaufort country, it is only when an obliging fox runs in the right direction that these same walls and hedges are jumped by Prince Charles, Camilla Parker Bowles and others in the Beaufort Hunt's field.

Foxhunting and drag hunting are uneasy bedfellows, however. Many foxhunts are suspicious of drags, believing them to be opposed to their sport. Drag hunts have no formal view on foxhunting, although Brian Stern, the general secretary of the Masters of Drag Hounds and Blood Hounds Association, believes Michael Foster's Wild Mammals (Hunting with Dogs) Bill is misconceived and socially divisive.

Mr Stern's 17.3-hand hunter, Jack, bowled along easily over the Highgrove hedges, and there is no doubting his enthusiasm for his particular sport. "But drag hunting is a game," he says. "We do not see ourselves as an alternative to foxhunting."

By this he means that foxes are vermin, that they need to be killed, and that the alternatives to foxhunting are gassing, snaring, shooting or trapping. Those who argue that foxhunting should be replaced by drag, because the chase can be just as thrilling with a smelly soiled rag, seldom bear the farmer's needs in mind. Unless there is vermin control, few landowners will look charitably on a galloping horde of huntsmen enjoying themselves at the expense of their pastures and hedges.

The Prince of Wales last Sunday was clearly prepared to overlook the negative aspects of drag hunting. And, by hosting such a hunt for the first time at Highgrove, he is moving with public opinion on hunting matters. The drag hunt was planned in February, so Mr Foster can claim no credit for having swayed the Prince's mind.

When the Prince was studying at Sandhurst he rode with the drag. Pat Sutton, the master, who first rode out aged 12, recalls: "He always rode up at the front." He was, of course, younger then, and possibly bolder. His return to the drag hunt takes account of the widely held view that a false scent followed by hounds is likely to be the only permissible method of hunting in the new millennium.

That is, unless the very idea of kennelling a pack of specially bred hounds for the purpose of sport comes under attack from those who think that a canine life other than endless hours in front of a fire and walks in a park is to be deplored. Animal-rights campaigners have already aired this view.

Perhaps the driver of an orange Mini we encountered felt that way. Either that, or it was his innate prejudice against a bunch of "toffs" in a colourful collection of red, blue, black and green hunting coats that

Lin Jenkins, who negotiated drystone walls for the first time

made him accelerate dangerously past a line of horses in the road while making an obscene gesture.

He was not the only one. Even around Highgrove, deep in a rural community, the sight of a hunt elicited an angry response from a large number of passers-by. It was impossible to explain to the woman passenger in a white Peugeot who yelled "Killers!" out of the window that there would be no kill. And that if the man who laid the scent were caught, he need fear only being licked to death — raw recruits have had to climb trees to escape the hounds' affections.

Drag hunting gets little publicity other than from the anti-foxhunting brigade, who parade it as an "acceptable" country pursuit. *Horse and Hound*, the equestrian weekly, declined an invitation to cover the meet at Highgrove, even though no other drag hunt had ever hosted a meet to which so many members from other packs had travelled to attend.

The equestrian world's antipathy may be because the sport is promoted not by those who take part, but by those who are anti-foxhunting. Prince Charles's support, given the stand-offish nature of the equestrian hierarchy, is a serious boost. "Being allowed to meet at Highgrove is quite a coup," says Mr Stern.

Drag hunting is immense fun. Like all equestrian pursuits it can be dangerous. At Highgrove, several riders ended up with bumps and bruises, although the worst damage was to their pride. One woman whose face collided with a wall was quite badly hurt, but even she was able to walk away herself before going to hospital.

As we hacked back to the horse boxes, Toffee jogged and snatched excitedly at the bit. "Well, you have survived," said a friend from the Sandhurst drag. "That's what it is all about." Indeed, the following morning I felt I had done several rounds in the boxing ring and still retained an element of the terror of approaching my first drystone wall. Prince Charles had missed a terrific day.

How to join the Victorian sport of drag hunting

DRAG HUNTING differs from foxhunting in that the hounds or foxhounds follow a scent laid by a runner trailing a smelly bag behind him, rather than the scent of a fox.

The man runs over fields, hedges and rivers on a route which has been pre-arranged between the hunt and the landowner, whose farms the mounted field will be crossing.

Blood hounding is similar, except that the hounds are of a different breed, and chase the airborne scent of a man or woman — who often has not washed for a while — running ahead of them. They tend to be slower.

Trail scents, used in both sports, began as foxhound contests which could be easily watched as one hunt pitted their prowess against another. It was not long before people realised it would be fun to follow on horseback and enjoy the fast and furious pursuit.

The sport developed farther on grounds of convenience: those who could not find the time to spend a whole day watching and waiting for the foxhounds to pick up a live scent decided to lay their own trail.

Oxford University was one of the first institutions to form a dedicated drag pack, and Cambridge University followed suit in 1855.

The Army, attracted by the short time it took to follow the drag, together with the intensity of the equestrian demand, formed the Shorncliffe in east Kent in 1861. The Household Brigade formed its drag pack two years later, the Royal Artillery at Woolwich in 1866, and the Staff College at Camberley and the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst in 1869.

Drag hunting became so esteemed an activity at the latter that, by the end of the 19th century, those who did not ride well with the drag stood little chance of a staff job.

Attitudes have changed, but the Army still hunts with the Sandhurst drag, and the pack is still celebrated in photographs and memorabilia at the recently abandoned Staff College at Sandhurst.

False scents also provide better amusement for those who follow the hunt on foot. In fact, they follow by car, but the advantage of a false scent is that they can be told where to look for the spectacle.

The dress code for drag hunting is similar to that for foxhunting. Each hunt has its uniform of hunt coat, collar and buttons, which is awarded to those enthusiastic enough to be given their hunt colours.

Visitors and occasional participants wear a black or blue hunting coat and stock, or neckcloth, or a simple hacking jacket with shirt and tie.

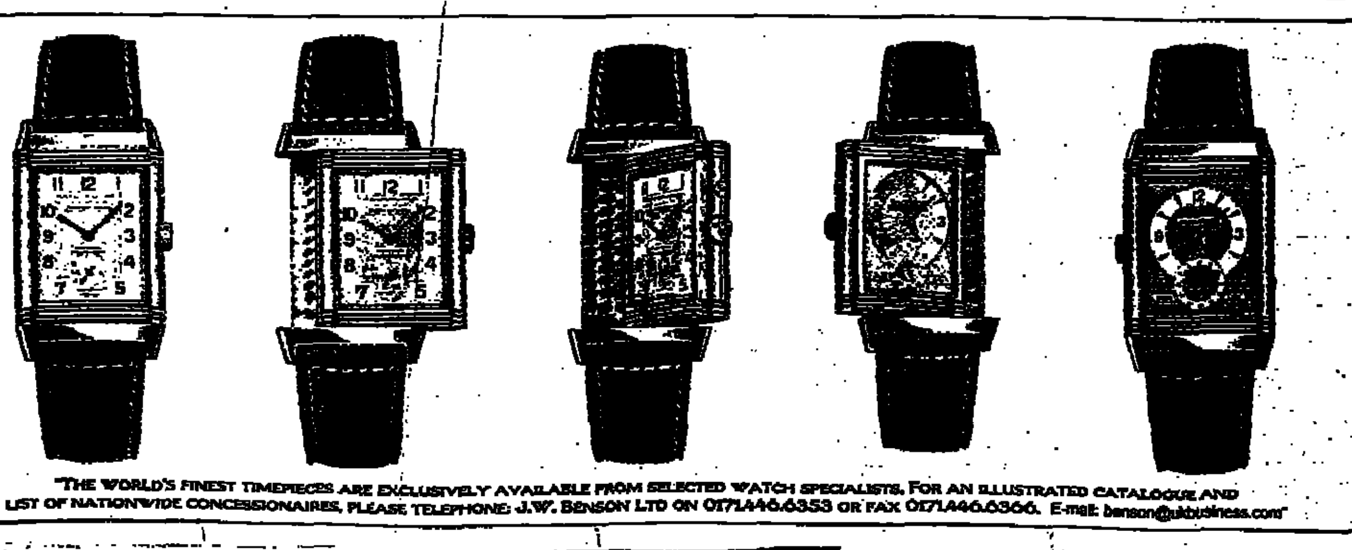
COSTS VARY, but an average subscription for a member of a hunt is about £400 for a season. That runs from October to April, with a hunt meeting perhaps six times a month. Visitors pay between £35 and £50 a day although there are deals for newcomers.

An experienced hunter would cost from £5,000, but many people who ride to hound have paid much less for their horses. The cost of keeping a horse stabled at livery for the purpose of drag hunting in the South East of England costs at least £100 a week, excluding the cost of shoeing and transport to shows. However, costs are lower in the summer when the horse is resting at grass.

LIN JENKINS

KIT HOUGHTON

A runner with the Sandhurst drag will trail a bag of aniseed, liquid paraffin and other ingredients as he runs across fields



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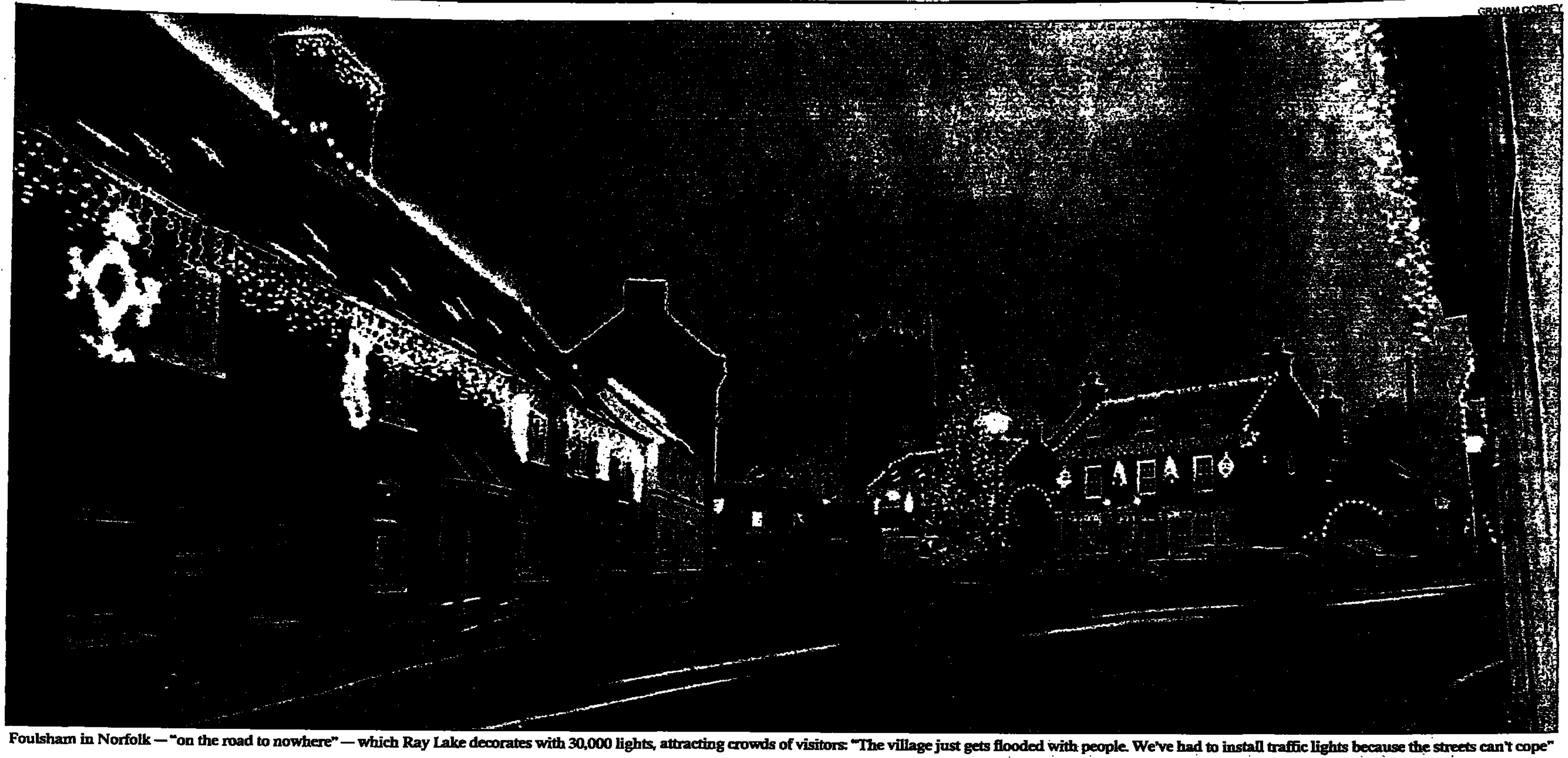


Foulsham in Norfolk — "on the road to nowhere" — which Ray Lake decorates with 30,000 lights, attracting crowds of visitors: "The village just gets flooded with people. We've had to install traffic lights because the streets can't cope"

We're all lit up for Christmas

Some people spend thousands on festive lights, but with mixed results, says **Damian Whitworth**

As you read this, something may be nagging away at the back of your mind. You have tried to shut it out but it will not go away. Eventually you are going to have to accept that it is time to get the ladder and go into the loft. It is time to hunt for the Christmas tree lights.

Of all the seasonal rituals, putting the glow glow glow into Christmas is one that can be guaranteed to remove a lot of the early ho ho ho. Who has not found themselves overcome by humbug after wrestling to identify the one blown bulb that is ruining the entire string of coloured lights?

For some, dreaming of a bright Christmas occupies their entire year. By now they are sitting at home beneath roofs groaning with the weight of thousands of lights and a thick layer of (fake) snow. Festive illuminations can be controversial. The displays in the West End of London this year have been criticised by the Royal Institute of British Architects for lacking imagination and taste. And Ron Mann, of Worcester, was the focus of attention last week because his 1,000-bulb display had been put up two months before Christmas.

However, this is low wattage compared to others blazing out of some corners of the country. By Ray Lake's own admission, Foulsham, the Norfolk village which is home to him and 800 other souls "is on the road to nowhere". But his yuletide home-improvement programme has brought half the county flocking to his door.

Mr Lake, 53, is the driving force behind a lighting display that has grown beyond his wildest dreams. "I started out five or six years ago in a small way, just 1,000 bulbs on my house. Now we've got in excess of 30,000 lights this year. We've spread from our house to the market square and the High Street because we had so many people coming to the house we couldn't cope.

"The village has beautiful old houses and we've done all their roofs and chimneys and even the gutterings and the church tower. We've got Christmas trees, candles, bells and sleighs. We set the lights on wire frames made by my son. They take several weeks to make but if we had bought them it would have cost the better part of £100,000. We've probably spent £15,000-£20,000 over the years."

Mr Lake pays for the bulbs himself and takes time off from running his firm of electricians, for which his two sons also work, to spend three weeks putting up the lights. "We get great pleasure out of it and last year we took £30,000 for charity," he says.

CHRIS ISON

John and Diane Southern, from Bristol, decorate their garden each Christmas

Although his corner of Norfolk is sparsely populated, word of the illuminations has spread far and wide and Mr Lake is overwhelmed. "We've got 100 coaches booked already. The village just gets flooded with people. We've had to install traffic lights because the streets can't cope. Every parking place is allocated and we have got fields set aside for cars. My wife and a friend used to organise the whole thing but now we have 15 people doing it and we had our first planning meeting back in June. It's getting beyond us. We are the victims of our own success, I suppose. You obviously get some people who get cheesed off in the village. I'm all right because we are out of the main square and have got a back exit, but it can be annoying."

The one thing Mr Lake is determined to control is the quality of his work. His lights, he insists, will not be tacky: "I think ours are tasteful. We try and keep away from the plastic images."

The Smyth family of Holywell, Clwyd, are equally busy. They have a garden filled with hundreds of film and cartoon characters created from plywood and thousands of coloured bulbs. This year they were working round the clock to ensure that the Teletubbies and a dragon that breathes smoke will be ready to join Mickey Mouse and all 101 dalmatians. "My husband does lighting sequences and we have music on tape for all the different characters. Coaches come throughout the Christmas season," says Lynnette Smyth, who has been rigging up Christmas illuminations for 21 years.

"The neighbours probably think we are mad but they love it. It's Christmas, isn't it? The electricity bill goes up by about £300 but it's worth it. It gives pleasure to so many people, especially those who can't get up to Blackpool."

Carol Read, 55, whose home in Gorleston, Norfolk, will once again be bedecked with 15,000 lights this season, explains that the key to a successful display is inventiveness. "It's not a big house but we've got ten Christmas trees inside." Highlights on the outside of her semi include a Santa and sleigh over the door and reindeer on the eaves.

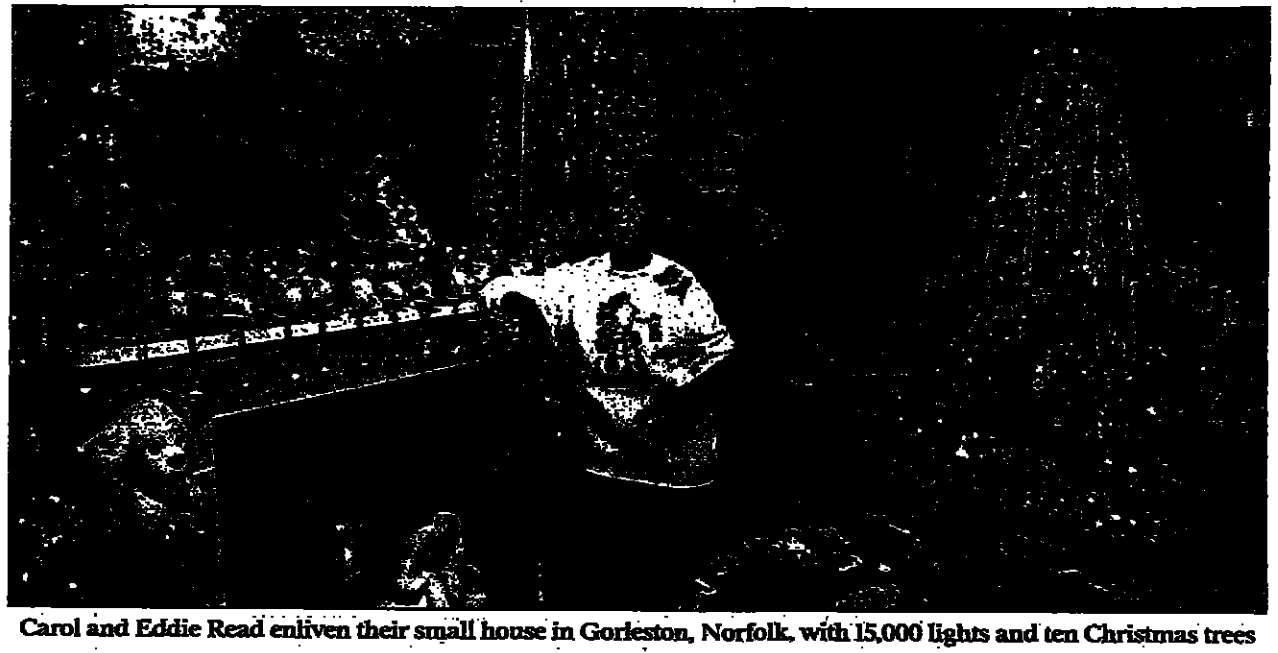
"Children ask if Santa's in and I have a little answerphone and I press it and it says: 'Santa's not in at the moment, he's out loading his sleigh but he will get back to you after these jingles'."

The art is a competitive one, with aficionados highly critical of each other's efforts. Mrs Read is not impressed by Mr Mann who, with just 1,000 lights, managed to commit some cardinal style faux pas. "Those Father Christmases were very tacky, I'm sorry to say," she remarks of the large plastic Santas that had featured on the outside of the house. "I colour-blend in. If I'm doing a room in pink I do it in pink. You can't have bits of different coloured tinsel everywhere. I don't do it to show off, don't get me wrong. I love the decorations. They make the house look warm and cosy and inviting.

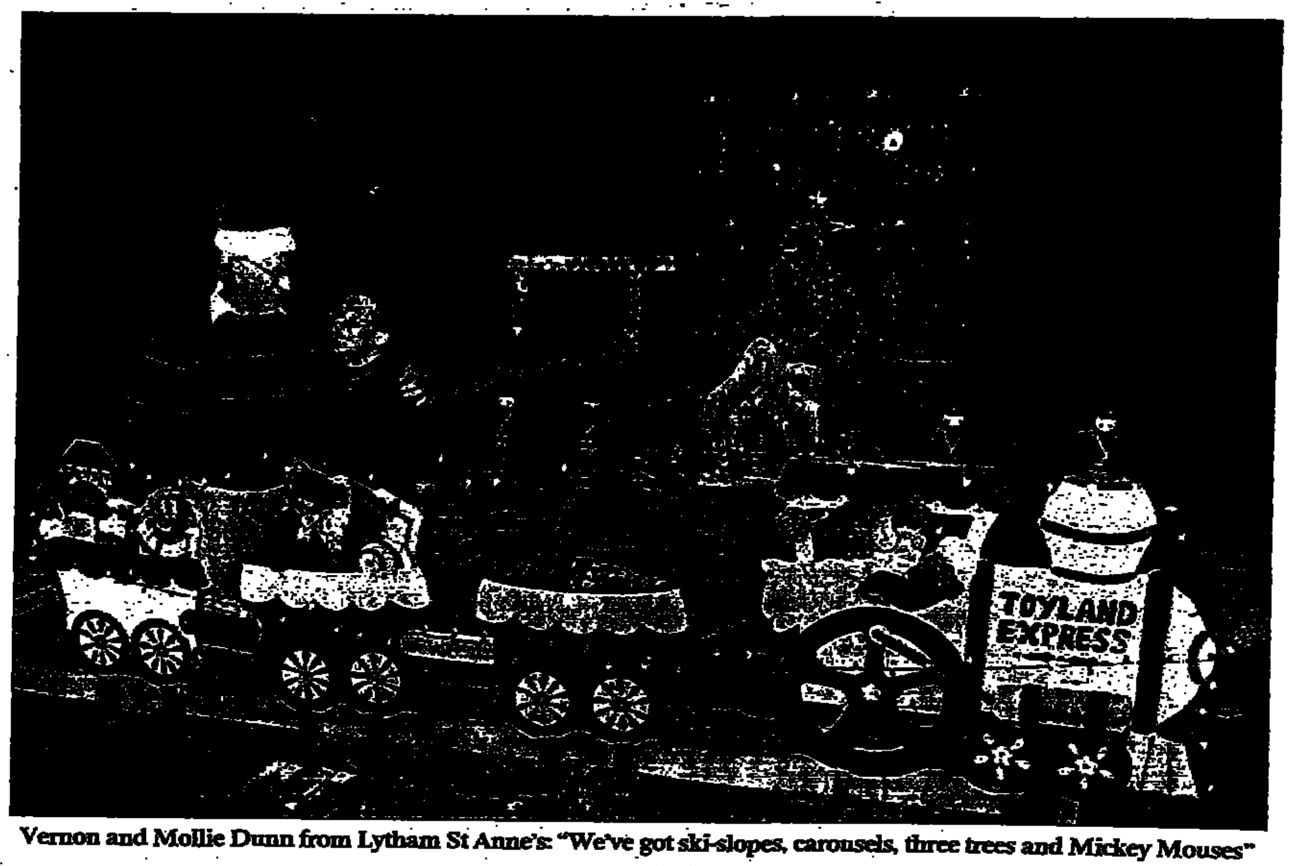
"We have coachloads of people queueing up and we are constantly opening the door so people can come through the house. It must have cost thousands over the years but I don't think of it like that, it's my pleasure."

Not everyone is as happy. Vernon and Mollie Dunn are distraught because, for the first time since they started their idiosyncratic decorations six years ago at their home in Lytham St Anne's, Lancashire, they have not been able to mount their display. "I've a bad shoulder," explains Vernon, 69, "so we couldn't do the garden this year and we've had so many disappointed callers. Inside, we've got ski-slopes, carousels, three Christmas trees, Christmas bands and Mickey Mouses, but I couldn't manage the garden. But next year I'm going to make a comeback — I've got some catalogues from America already."

'They give pleasure to so many people, especially those who can't get up to Blackpool'



Carol and Eddie Read enliven their small house in Gorleston, Norfolk, with 15,000 lights and ten Christmas trees



Vernon and Mollie Dunn from Lytham St Anne's: "We've got ski-slopes, carousels, three trees and Mickey Mouses"

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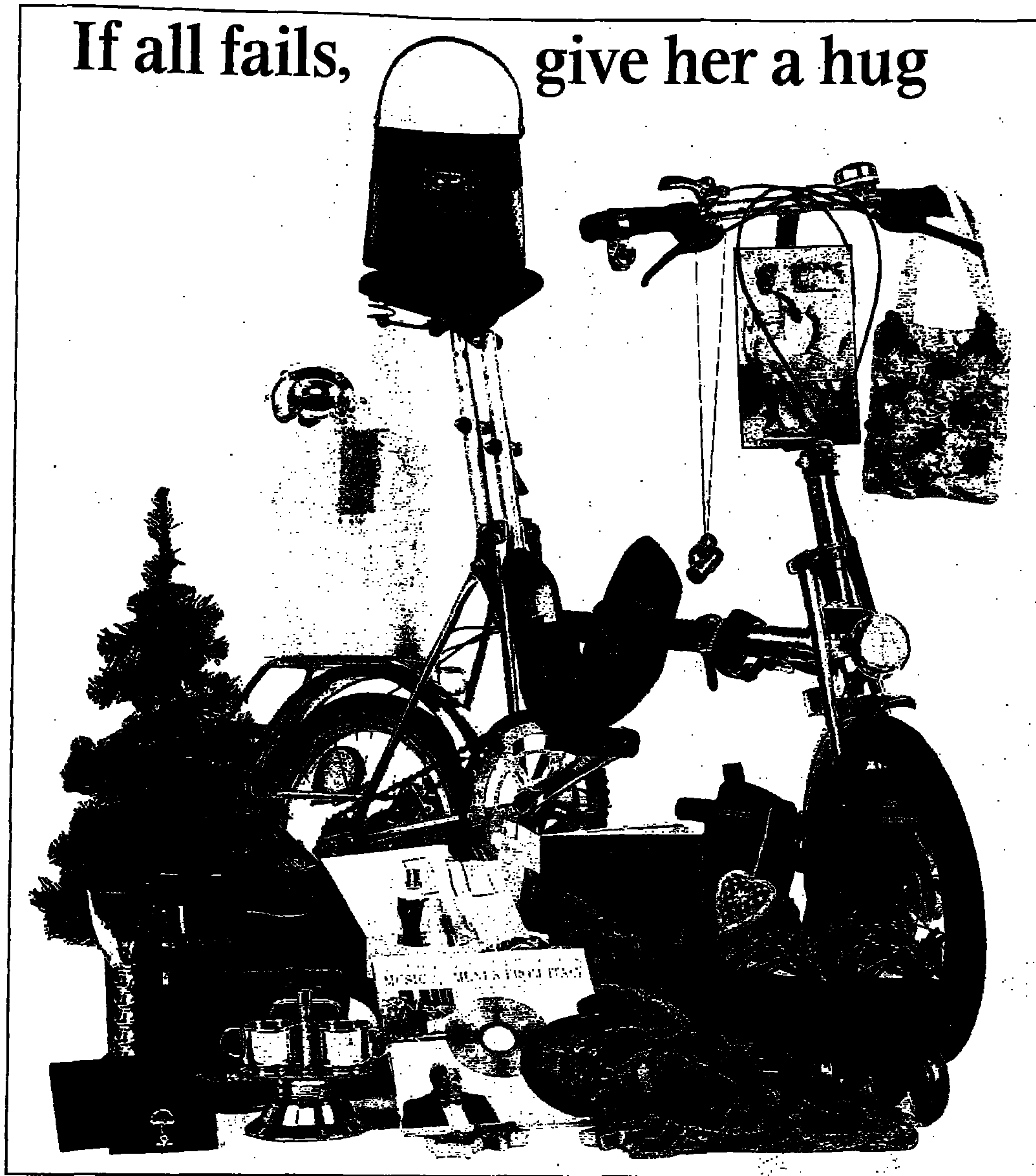


PRESENTS FOR HER

With so many shops reluctant to take back unwanted Christmas presents because it depresses their January till receipts, it is important that you buy the woman in your life the right gift first time. If you find choosing the perfect present too daunting a challenge, then do not be ashamed just to play safe: compromise on something that is sensually feminine, but which can be easily absorbed into the everyday life of the household if it turns out not to be, after all, her heart's most burning desire. This way, if she opens her present on Christmas morning and sighs, "Oh darling, it's absolutely lovely, but I think there's probably still some life left in the pure badger shaving brush/186-piece spanner set/Melinda Messenger cufflinks (one breast per cuff, set in sterling silver, very tasteful) that you also bought me last year", your carefully chosen present is not completely wasted.

Of course, the shops will be closed on Christmas Day, making it difficult actually to go out and buy a replacement gift, but do not despair: just remember that every "intimate" survey you have ever read in *Cosmopolitan* says that what women most want from their man is a cuddle and a sense of humour. So wrap up your arms in some festive tissue paper and give your wife or girlfriend a warm hug, while telling her that hilarious joke about the Duchess of York and the dried apricots. If she baulks at your generous, affectionate gift, then it is probably just as well you found out she was an ungrateful, humourless little hussy before you had splashed out on buying her a top-of-the-range, Brian Lara-endorsed cricket bat for her next birthday.

JOE JOSEPH

PRESENT her with the ultimate transport: a **fold-up bike** in stainless steel, £475 from Nauticalia (mail order, 01932 253333). On bicycle saddle: Carolina Herrera's taupe mock-python "Kelly" **bag**, £302 (0181-858 9718). On handle bars: chrome **mini-monocular** for theatre lovers, £37.50, Paperchase (0171-580 8496). For the woman who likes *nothing* better than undressing a classical body: Michelangelo's David **fridge magnet**, £9.95, from Initial Ideas (mail order, 01548 831070) A lasting alternative to roses: cream silk **handbag** by designer Sam Cross, £86, Koh Samui (0171-240 4280). On bike's back: a **candle** that will last all winter, £65, Habitat (0654 334433). On top of candle: silver and jewelled **sphere** with a replaceable scented candle inside, £59.90, Parks Candles (0181-830 6300). Contemporary, and very precious, moonstone, crystal and tourmaline, **bracelet** by Sarah Weiss, £460, Koh Samui (as before). On bike's middle-bar: silk and linen **slippers** with golden embroidery, £100, The General Trading Company (0171-730 0411). Black suede **leather** belt with diamanté buckle, £39.95, Harvey Nichols (0171-235 5000). Give *the green woman in* your life a **tree** from the BTCV (the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers). For a donation of £17, volunteers will plant a tree as part of a campaign to increase the UK's native woodland cover (01491 839766).

MIDDLE ROW: Vega Rhine hand-made **wine glass**, in a range of six colours, £58, Baccarat (0171-409 7767). Black nylon **vanity bag**, £460, Tanner Krolle (0171-491 2243) with several compartments to store her essential beauty aids. Walnut leather **CD case**, £95, to carry her music collectionabroad or in the car, Mulberry (01749 340500). Zarvi's **redemption kit**, £35: an indulgent set of bath oils and herbs, Liberty (0171-734 1234). Take her on experience she will never forget: a **flight** in a Tiger Moth, £139 for 30 minutes, Red Letter Days (0181-343 5354). Or give her wings on her feet with the latest K2 Extreme Flight **inline skates**, £159, Road Runner (0171-792 0584). Christmas decoration on inline-skate: **velvet heart**, £3.25, General Trading Company (as before).

FRONT ROW (from left): French **purse**, £69, and credit-card purse, £39, both in dark brown leather with golden buckle, Harvey Nichols (as before). Two-cup luxury chrome **espresso maker**, £44.95, Ocean (mail order, 0800 132985). Give her a real taste of Italy with Antonio Carluccio's *Music and Menus from Italy*, a **recipe book** with CD for her to sing along to, £16.99, The Conran Shop (0171-589 7401). Or wrap her in a pure luxury: a hand-embroidered silver silk **scarf**, £450, Georgina von Etzdorf (0171-409 7789)

Photographs by **Des Jenson**. Styling and research by **Jennifer Rüggeberg**

GADGETS

CHRISTMAS is coming, the goose is getting frantic and any time now the decorations should be going up. This year's seasonal Made in China novelty is the singing Christmas tree, which has a sensor attached to a branch.

Walk past the 32in-high plastic tree and it bursts into life. The branches move to reveal large flashing eyes and a huge mouth which mouths festive greetings and bursts of carols.

The tree comes with a mains adaptor and has a three-way switch, volume control and, fortunately, an off switch. Children love it but older elves might find the limited repertoire grates by Christmas Eve.

The singing tree

Wacky Shaky Christmas Pals are 4in-high soft toys built around rigid plastic bodies. Clap your hands and they sing *Jingle Bells* as if on helium. On a carpet they wobble furiously but on a smooth surface they jerk through a full circle before turning themselves off.

TIM WAPSHOTT

● *Singing Christmas Tree, £49.95 plus p&p, and Wacky Shaky Christmas Pals, £9.95 plus p&p, from the Gadget Shop (01482 860860).*

Where you can buy gifts at a gallop

Richard Pitman gets his last-minute presents from a wood and paper shop, **Michael Cable** discovers

In the annual stampede of the Christmas Shopping Stakes, former champion jockey Richard Pitman always waits until well into the final furlong before making his move. Then, on Christmas Eve, he goes galloping into Once A Tree in Cheltenham, knowing it is an odds-on certainty that he will be able to find something there for everyone on his list.

"For anyone like me who leaves buying their gifts until the very last moment, it's the perfect place, full of the most interesting and unusual presents," says Mr Pitman, 54, who is now a racing commentator and best-selling thriller writer.

As the name implies, everything sold in Once A Tree is made from wood or paper. Products come from all around the world and range from toys and games to kitchen utensils and from graceful African figures carved out of ebony to novelties such as wooden wrist watches and wooden fountain pens.

The Cheltenam branch, located in an award-winning, two-storey glass building in the heart of the city's Montpellier shopping area, is one of a chain of six up and down the country.

"The Oxford branch is actually nearer to where I'm living these days, but I'm always in Cheltenham for the racing and my 85-year-old mother still lives up the road so I prefer to come here," he says.

"I regularly used to buy dressing gowns as presents from another shop nearby called The Square Pillow, which was how I first discovered Once A Tree."

And he adds: "Their stuff is so irresistible that I usually end up buying presents for myself as well as for other people. We men normally end up with socks and pants and handkerchiefs at Christmas, so I take the opportunity to spoil myself."

A giraffe carved in the Zimbabwean village of Binga from the wood of the Munyanya tree, a life-size heron made from the Indonesian softwood belalu and a serpent fashioned from a length of creeper, all purchased from Once A Tree, can be found decorating various corners of the Oxfordshire village home he shares with Mandy, his wife.

He also collects walking sticks, of which Once A Tree has a wide selection, and is very taken with its "rain sticks" — dried cactus stems, 2-3ft long and a couple of inches wide, with seeds which cascade down inside when you turn them, creating a soothing sound like falling rain. "Great for de-stressing yourself," he says.

my favourite shop

CHRIS BARKER

Under starter's orders: Richard Pitman with managers Luan Nanness and Belinda Wilson

It is hard to believe Mr Pitman does suffer from stress. But his life has been tough and success did not come easy. Born within a bookmakers' signalling distance of the racecourse at Cheltenham, he became a stable lad because, he says, "what else do you do if you're the uneducated runt of the litter who has failed all nine of your O-levels?"

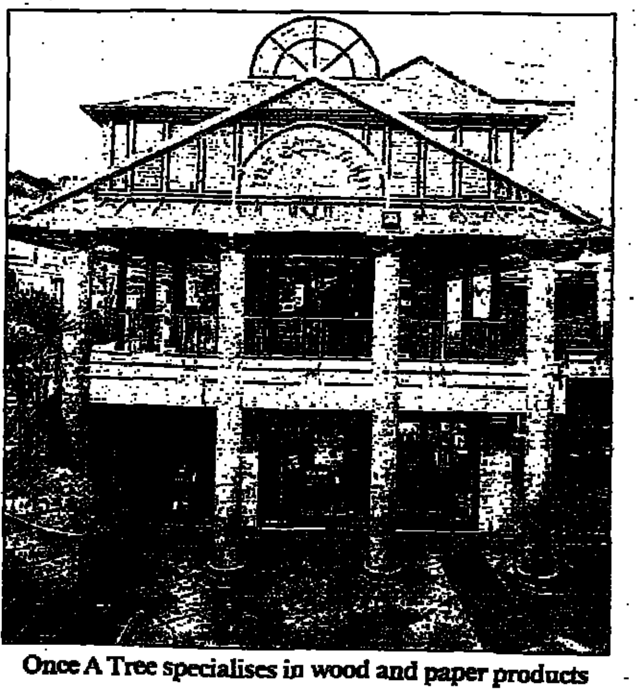
He went on to win 470 races, including just about every classic except the Grand National, for which he was cruelly pipped in the last few strides in 1973.

Eighteen years later, this disappointment was compounded when, as a commentator, he watched exactly the same thing happen to Mark, his son by his first wife Jenny Pitman.

During his own 15-year riding career, he broke nearly every bone is his body many times over — nose and collarbone at least ten times each, ribs, ankles, legs and arms on a regular basis. On top of that there was the continual torture, for a naturally chunky figure, of sweating off the pounds to make the weight.

So why does anybody do it? "There's nothing like thrill of riding half a ton of thoroughbred over a fence in front of a big crowd," he shrugs, with a twinkle in his one good eye, having lost the sight of the other five years ago after being repeatedly kicked by a horse that threw him as he was trying to break it in.

That happened some time after he had retired from racing to become a BBC commentator and to run a small stud, breeding racehorses and Connemara ponies. A true countryman at heart, he feels a particular affinity with wood and craftsmanship which is why, he supposes, he is so drawn to Once A Tree.



Once A Tree specialises in wood and paper products

He just loves the feel of wood, he says, running his hands over some of the intricate puzzle boxes which fit together like jigsaws and come in walnut, burr maple and koa.

"And look at these," he adds, reaching for one of the flower vases in lignum vitae, the cream, green and brown colours of which change subtly in different lights. "They make marvellous and relatively inexpensive presents."

Naturally, he takes to a £595 rocking horse, by far the most expensive item in the shop, and sportingly agrees to be pictured in the saddle.

The old championship style is still there but, as he says cheerfully: "I sometimes miss the thrills, but not the spills."

● *Once A Tree, The Courtyard, Montpellier, Cheltenham (01242 224642). Mon-Sat 9.30am-5.30pm, Sun 11am-5pm.*

EXCLUSIVE OFFER THE TIMES

Save £100 on this Six-piece saucepan set

Only £99 inc p&p

Today *The Times* and Viners offer readers the chance to buy this quality stainless steel six-piece saucepan set from their Insight range for just £99, a saving of £100 on the mrrp of £199.

This stylish set has a highly polished finish, matching stainless steel knobs and stay-cool handles with hanging loops for easy storage. It consists of 16, 18 and 20cm saucepans and a 20cm casserole dish, all with glass lids, plus a 14cm milk pan and 24cm frying pan, both with a non-stick interior. Each pan has a 5mm encapsulated base allowing the heat to be absorbed quickly, which means food is cooked more efficiently.

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CHANGING TIMES

BARGAINS

There are bargains to be had all over the country. With £100, what would you buy?

THERE is a rotten tree stump in our garden. It is the only excuse I need to visit the West Midland Farmers' retail centre in Melksham, Wiltshire, with my £100.

WMF sells practical things for farmers: sheep dip, gate posts, chain saws and electric fences. There are no frills (farmers do not waste money) and everything is built to last. It is the sheer practicality that impresses me. And the 18 different types of wellington boot, from pricey green Hunters to heavy black galoshes with real heels and soles. Wellies are the first item on my list and I choose the Steel Shanks with rust-red soles and shiny patent uppers. Not bad for £8.95 and a perfect accompaniment to the £7.95 waterproof suit. Just the thing to wear when uprooting a tree stump.

Rural essential

Sadly, WMF does not sell dynamite. But the £19.51 Hand Power Puller Shifts Two Tons is the next best thing. Bolt it to the wall with the 15in adjustable spanner (£9.81) and you can shift almost anything.

Having pulled out the root I need to chop it up, which is why I have spent £16.99 on a tree-felling axe with American hickory handle. Once the hole is filled in and turfed over, an old-fashioned galvanised watering can with brass rose (£10.95) is just what is needed.

Now a confession. I am an impostor in WFM, so I am going to buy a sign, Beware of Bull, for £4.30. There is still enough left over for an aluminium lamp shade and a combine harvester — for my five-year-old son.

SIMON DE BRUXELLES

مكتبة الأجل

هكذا من الأصل

Dark, velvety treats for winter nights

When the skies are grey and it is too cold even to contemplate slipping into that little strappy evening dress, there are only three things that cheer me up: a big log fire, wine and a pair of velvet trousers.

Odd? Perhaps. But velvet has that ability to lift the spirits. It's not just that it clings to the body in a soft, fluid way: it is also comfortable, warm and looks fantastically dramatic.

This season the range is bigger than ever. There are not only the bohemian jackets worn by Bloomsbury bon vivants such as Lady Ottoline Morrell, but the sexy rocker styles flaunted by rebels such as Marianne Faithfull.

Stores are draped with long, slinky dresses and flowing palazzo pants for evening, and tailored trouser suits and hipsters with satin-trimmed tops for hang-loose occasions. There are also slips, saucy shorts and bikini tops, which can be worn day or evening.

"Velvet takes colour in a way that is both light and dark," says the designer Caroline Charles, "which means it has depth that works for most occasions."

Accessories have been created to complement the looks: tasselled and beaded evening bags, embroidered shawls and strappy sandals. And the item most coveted by women for winter: a scarf from Georgina von Etzdorf, Clarissa Hulse or Neisha Crosland.

Because velvet has a strong base and a soft, silky pile, it is surprisingly resilient, making it an ideal fabric to distress and burn with paint and acids. Devoré finishes were featured in almost every winter collection, from Donna Karan and Issey Miyake to Paul Frith and Vivienne Westwood.

At Etro, which opened on London's New Bond Street in September, deep-pile velvets and see-through delicates are both well represented. "Velvet is both sporty and luxurious which perfectly complements the spirit of our time," says Kean Etro, design director.

Unlike the 1920s, when the only velvet available was made of silk, today's synthetic, inexpensive lookalikes are easy to clean. High-street stores stock elegant dresses for less than £100, velveteen shoes for less than £30, and accessories for less than a fiver. Which means that everyone can now join in the velvet revolution.

LISA GRAINGER

Photographs by **Richard Burns.** Hair and make-up by **Sally Kvalheim** for Jo Hansford (0171-495 7774). Styling by **Amandip Uppal.** Shot on location at Mulberry's **Charlton House Hotel** (01749 342008).

TOP LEFT: Dark blue velvet coat, £520, Katharine Hamnett, SW1 (0171-623 1002) Devoré dress, £449, Paul Frith, Harrods, SW1 (0171-739-8150) Red snakeskin ankle-tie shoes, £225, Gina, SW1 (0171-235 2932)

ABOVE: Fake fur-trim silk coat, £650, Scapa, W1 (0171-637 1450) Plum knitted cardigan, £120, The Scotch House, SW1 (mail order, 0171-581 2151). Green devoré bias-cut skirt, £49 99 Next, as before. Plum and bronze beaded choker, £295, Van Peterson, SW3, and Liberty, W1 (0171-584 1101). Velvet ankle-tie pumps, £175, Gina, as before

TOP RIGHT: Plum velour stretch tank-top, £78, Etro, W1 (0171-495 5767). Pink velvet trousers, £49 99, Next (0345 100500)

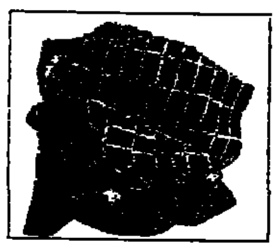
ABOVE LEFT: Dark brown and red velvet dress, £760, Etro, as before. Orange crushed-velvet silver-hoop bag, £85, Coccinelle, Dickins & Jones (0171-734 7070)

FAR LEFT: Grey metallic silk puff skirt with black velvet trim, £312, Workers For Freedom, Liberty, W1; Harrods, SW1 (0171-978 7818). Black sheer-knit vest top, £390 Gucci, 33 Old Bond Street, W1 (0171-629-2716) Black suede mules, £195, Gina, as before

LEFT: Deep plum velvet blazer with satin trim, £425, matching palazzo pants, £275, lace vest, £255, Mulberry, W1 (0171-491 3900). Velvet bag, £21, Marks & Spencer, selected branches (0171-935 4422). Red velvet shoes with leather straps, £295, Gina, as before

THREE OF A KIND

IN THE depths of winter, nothing cheers a woman up like a soft, luxurious velvet scarf. Here are three of the best



TOP: Marmalade devore "French knot", £125, Neisha Crosland, Harrods, SW1, Liberty, W1 (0171-978 4389)
TOP RIGHT: Devoré scarf, £75, Fenn Wright and Manson, House of Fraser (0171-323 4821)
RIGHT: Paisley devore scarf, £129, Caroline Charles, W1 (0171-629 4077)

Citric fruit and nuts with a layer of honeycomb in the background followed after a moment by vanilla and caramel. Full bodied, even and creamy, with a subdued sweet flavour at the outset and a light and dry finish.

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GLENMORANGIE WOOD FINISHES
For those who nose.

‘As the years advance, and spontaneity succumbs to maternity, I have found myself turning, in my vague way, into Mrs Bonkers’

What’s cooking this Christmas?

LIFE AND SOUL

JANE SHILLING

Well, look here. I am sorry to mention the C-word, but there is no escaping it now. Even I have had to admit that it is happening. Outside the greengrocers there are rows and rows of Christmas trees, trussed up like prickly grey-green holsters, and above them, back and forth all the way up Blackheath High Street, zigzags a string of fairy lights, provided, it says on a large banner, by the tradespeople of Blackheath (no nasty municipal lights for *us*, thanks all the same).

The Great Switch-On takes place this afternoon. "Shall we be there?" Alexander wants to know. It depends on how I am getting on with my panic buying, is the answer.

When the sun shines and the roses are in bloom, in the sections of daily newspapers given over to the doings of batty but harmless women — the very fag-ends of the Home News pages — there appears each year a report of how some Mrs Bonkers of Nottingham or Ipswich has made it her business to complete all her Christmas shopping six months ahead of time, right down to the turkey, the mince pies and the stuffing, which now repose, carefully date-labelled, in some far crevice of her chest freezer.

God, how sad, I used to think, as of course you are meant to, on reading of poor Mrs Bonkers and her attempt to Get Ahead of Herself. Except that, as the years advance, and spontaneity succumbs to maternity, I have found myself turning, in my vague and disorganised way, into Mrs Bonkers. The January sales (which, for some reason, I dread far less than the spiteful ruck of West End Christmas shoppers) find me scooping up armsful of devoré velvet this and crystal that, thinking, "This will do for Mary; this will be perfect for Lucy."

The maddening thing is, it doesn't work. December comes and, smug as Martha Stewart after bottling a bushel of plums, I fling open the door of the present cupboard to examine the treasures inside, only to discover that they were fairy gold. The pretty baubles that glittered so enticingly early in the year look tawdry by the steely light of Advent. One by one they come out and are discarded. Won't do for Mary. Not perfect for Lucy. Not perfect for anyone, in fact, except the Oxfam shop.

So it's off again to the thronged pavement and the overheated shops, to be jostled and stepped on and bawled at through megaphones by fearsome school dinner ladies in fluorescent tabards until one feels ready to bite, like a two-year-old.

Meanwhile, my mother, who loves Christmas, has been longing to discuss The Arrangements ever since Stir Up Sunday, when she came home from church, put on her pinny, and segued straight into making the Christmas cake and next year's Christmas puddings. The puddings for this year have been sitting on a shelf in the pantry for the past 12 months, maturing. Black as peat and full of suet, they are the sort of puddings on which the British empire was built. In the mid-1980s, I kept one for three years. Tied up in a pocket handkerchief, it travelled back and forth with me to France. And every time, when the moment came, my companion felt unable to face eating it. I gave it back to my mother in the end. And she fed it to my father, who seems to have survived the experience — so far.

Anyway, I have been resisting, quite successfully until now, her attempts to engage me in festive conversation. But last weekend she got me trapped between the wall and the dining table and started to talk about birds. (She is assuming that I have not formulated an escape plan from the family celebrations and she is right. Every year, in mid-December, my girlfriends and I telephone each other and say mournfully, "Are you going home for *it*." "Yeah, so am I. Next year we really *must* book a house somewhere and have a grown-up Christmas." But then, if we did that, we'd have to behave like grown-ups. Some of us would have to cook. And others of us would have to wash up. And who would blunder, cursing genteelly as she stubs her toe on the bedpost, into my room at dead of night to hang up my Christmas stocking?)

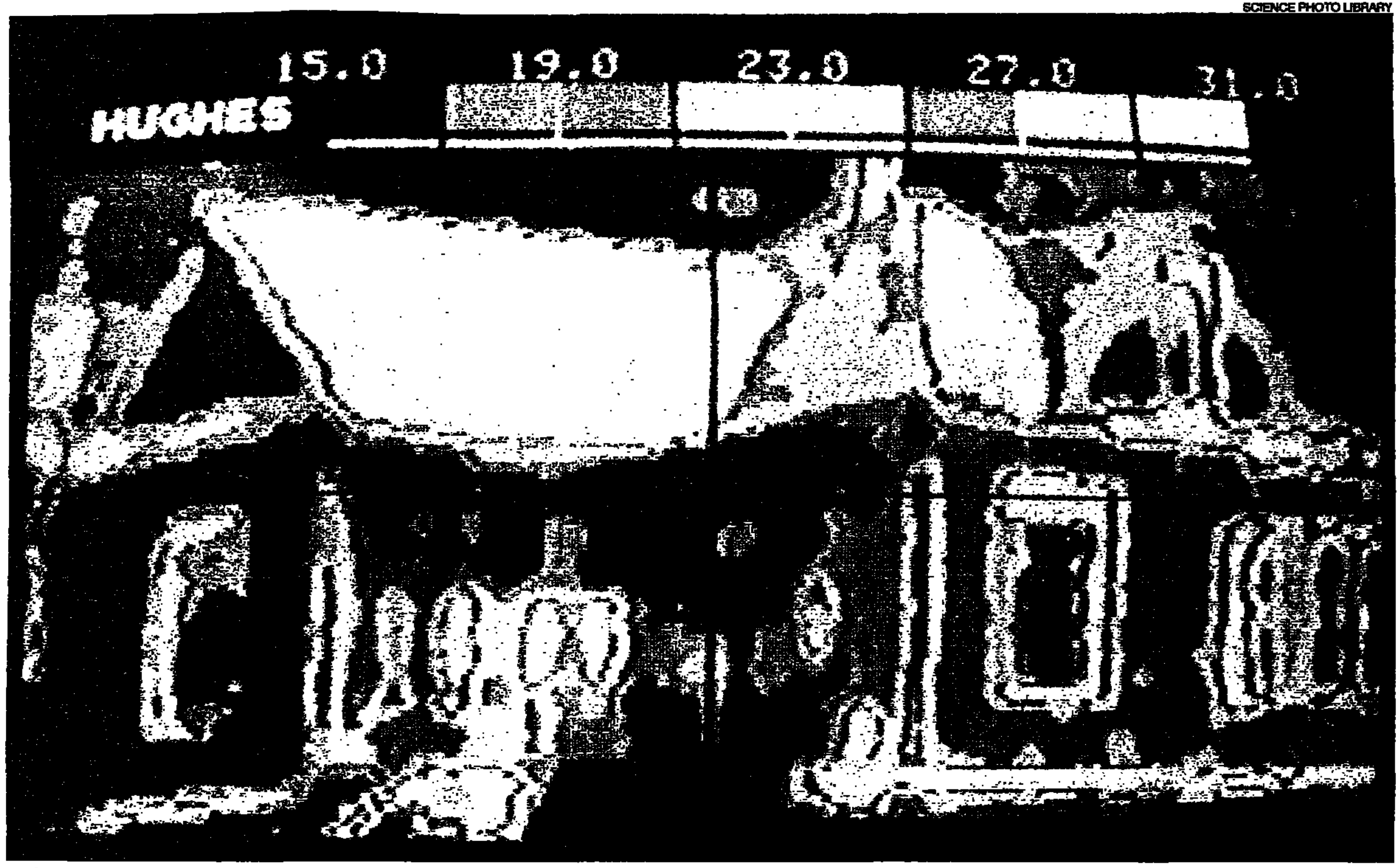
"So," said my mother, "I thought a goose might make a nice change this year." A goose? She cannot be serious. Call an ambulance, somebody, please. After what happened last time we had a goose. "It wasn't *that* bad," says my mother. Actually, it was.

It was a couple of years ago now. Some days before the bird was due to enter the oven, my mother sat down with log tables and a sliderule and, taking into account the ratio between bone density and surface area, and the square root of the wing span of the creature, calculated that it would be done to a turn in around 14½ hours.

So the Midnight Mass party went off to Mass, and the early church party went to early church, and lunchtime came, and we sat in a row with our funny hats on — and in came my mother, carrying an ashet, something that looked like a phoenix whose thermostat had gone horribly wrong. My father took a carving knife to it, but it was no good. You might as well have tried to carve something excavated at Pompeii. We had roast potatoes for Christmas lunch, and cabbage.

I drew a breath to remind my mother of all this (could she *really* have forgotten?). But it was all right. From the next room, the oracle spoke a single word: "Turkey," said my father.

SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY



Thermagram, or heat image, of a house showing the distribution of temperature. The temperatures are colour coded, with lighter colours representing the greatest heat loss

Turning green with the minimum of effort

Anjana Ahuja on how cutting out bad household habits can make a positive contribution to a better environment

In the past few years, anybody who wanted to adopt a greener lifestyle faced a discouraging prospect. It was an all-or-nothing commitment which involved cladding your roof with solar panels, ditching the car for a rusty old bike, bathing in two inches of water once a week, forsaking all things plastic and composting everything within sight. Once you had got your house looking like a cross between a hippie commune and the Mir space station, you were sorted.

The problem was that it was all so *daunting*. Few people had the time, money or inclination to conduct such a radical overhaul of their lives. So most of us sat back and let the Green Revolution pass us by.

In fact, according to the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), which has just issued a report to tie in with the climate change conference in Kyoto, Japan, great environmental strides can be made with little changes. Dr Jacquelin Burgess, a cultural geographer from University College London, who co-wrote the report, says that major savings can be made simply by cutting out bad habits, such as leaving the tap running while brushing your teeth, and leaving lights on after leaving a room. "Once we spot these habits, we can see the sense in changing them," Dr Burgess says.

There is already a scheme, Action at Home, which encourages people to do just that. It was devised by Global Action Plan (GAP), a London-based environmental charity, and it encourages people to make small-scale, manageable changes to their lifestyle. Households pay a one-off fee of £5 to join, for which they receive an action pack once a month for six months. Each pack covers a particular area, such as energy, water or waste. The packs contain simple tips which only the stubbornest of households would grumble about following.

Energy can be saved by turning the heating thermostat down by one degree, and by turning the television off at the set rather than with the remote control. Water use can be reduced by fixing dripping taps and replacing the odd bath with a shower. Shopping can be made more efficient by taking a shopping list, to discourage wasteful buying, and by eschewing throwaway conveniences such as disposable razors.

"We try to emphasise the positive and the practical," says Sallyanne Flemons, from GAP. "It is simple advice that people can follow and feel they are really achieving something. In the past, people have been made to feel guilty about the environment but we try to get away from that. We need to be realistic, and let people choose how much they do. We actually find that once participants get used to doing certain things, they want to do more."

The scheme has certainly made a sizeable difference among the 16,000 households across Britain that have participated. Waste has been cut by almost a third, and water use by 16 per cent. An average of five per cent has been shaved off household energy bills, and four per cent off petrol bills.

Dr Burgess herself runs an admirably green household given that she and her husband both work, and that they have two teenage children. They sort their waste, have a compost heap, restrict (organic) meat intake to two or three times a week, have an economical gas condensing boiler and double glazing. Seasonal vegetables from local farmers are delivered weekly. They all use public transport, except for the weekly shop.

Despite the process appearing to be relatively easy, Dr Burgess believes that turning Britain into a nation of greenies is going to prove a long haul. Firstly, people will only go so far in changing their habits. One type of behaviour that can hardly be budged is our dependence on the motor car. "A woman may need to do the school run, do the shopping and go to work, and it is very complicated to do it on public transport," Dr Burgess says. "Most of us can understand that."

But more significantly, there is a hard core of about 70 per cent of the nation that cannot be persuaded to indulge in any green behaviour at all, not even the odd trip to the bottle bank. It could be because they think that their individual contribution will make no difference to the state of the planet.

People are also more likely to have a sense of duty towards the environment if Government and other official institutions reinforce the same attitude. To this end, GAP has just completed an Action at Work pilot scheme at Devon County Council. The charity has also been working with schools; a clever spin-off is that as children grow into green citizens, they can encourage their parents to change.

Dr Burgess says: "It's about turning our philosophy into a much more pro-environmental one. But we are talking about a major social change here. It is not going to happen overnight, or even over a few months. It is going to be a long-term process of persuading people that we need to adopt more sustainable lifestyles."

HOW TO BE AN ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY HOUSEHOLD

- **Use a solar water heating system** (DIY costs £500 and will pay you back you in two to three years)
- **Always use full loads** in the washing machine
- **Wash dishes by hand**
- **Take a shower** instead of a bath
- **Collect rainwater** to water the garden (each person in the UK uses about 160 litres of water a day; only 15 litres are used for drinking and cooking)
- **Buy a CFC-friendly fridge** and freezer, or if possible use a larder or cool-room instead
- **Hang clothes on a washing line** or in an airing cupboard, instead of using dryers
- **Use low-energy appliances** and light bulbs to save electricity
- **Invest in draughtproofing** and insulation
- **Ride a bicycle** (71% of road trips are under five miles — easily cycled)
- **Set up a compost heap** in your garden for kitchen towels, boxes, cardboard, vegetables and grass cuttings
- **Low-solvent or water-based paints** should be used when decorating
- **Organic vegetables** are best
- **Place a water-filled plastic bottle in the lavatory cistern** to reduce water use. If you are really serious, install a compost toilet or set up a reed-bed sewage system
- **Natural ventilation** is better than air conditioning
- **Make use of windows** and reduce reliance on artificial light
- **Encourage hedgehogs** instead of using slug pellets

For sale: a tricycle made for three

A three-wheeled solution proved sweet but short-lived for **Fiona Maddocks**

You try your darndest for your children. Occasionally, foolishly, you try your darndest for yourself. My problem was getting around town with two children who were too big for pushchairs, too small for bicycles and too lazy to walk.

Driving anywhere in car-clogged Oxford is not an alternative, but since cycling is a high art in this city, there had to be a solution. I looked around. Parental competitiveness was evident in every cycle lane at every school gate, under every gleaming cycle helmet.

Most striking was the tall, thin man with an egg-like helmet perched on egg-like head, who trailed his family behind, each with their own pedals and wheels added like Meccano, diminishing in size. Having dropped them at various schools, he rattled himself off to work beaming, with empty crocodile swinging behind.

Then one morning I spotted the dream solution: a beautiful, stately, grown-up tricycle, ridden by a distinguished-looking woman with her child wedged into a wire rear basket. I had heard that the woman was a millionaire. When I investigated and found that these glorious machines cost £700, I knew the rumour to be true.

It made me all the more determined. I scoured the classifieds for a second-hand model and soon found one: £250 with two rear-facing child seats. Eureka! Easy. I bought it, untried, after a hurried inspection en route to a meeting, and was scarcely able to hand the money over fast enough. Two days later the owner's husband delivered it in his trailer. I was mildly surprised that he had not peddled the half-mile journey himself, but men can be idle. The first problem was that the back wheels would not go through the gate. No matter. It is amazing what brute force can do. Never mind the gouged left ankle, or the trampled hollyhocks in the front patch that this tricycle now called home.

Try it out first, the woman selling it had sensibly warned. "It has a tendency to go round in circles, also the camber of the road can be tricky . . .", but we were impatient. The children clambered on. They were already a bit too big, but it would last a couple of years. I would get some exercise, we would get about so much quicker, and we would all be smiling as we bowled happily along at full throttle, singing "Nobody solves a problem like Maria".

That is almost where this tale ends. We did go out that afternoon. Alarmed by the steep camber on our one-way street and the tendency to tip over, I stuck to the middle of the road, gathering a cortege of cars hooting behind me. Once on the open road, all went well. "Bet they way a ton," shouted one passer-by, referring to the children. "Not a bit," I replied, sweating. The trike itself already weighed a ton. What difference could a couple more on the back make? As we sailed into the city centre, heads turned admiringly. Too frightened and too proud to stop, we did a circular trip and returned home in one piece. I was elated.

That maiden voyage, alas, was also the last. I had not taken juvenile embarrassment into account. My elder daughter, aged seven, was adamant. Never again. No, no, no. The experience of those people staring was too shaming. It was too "different". She wanted to be the *same* as other people. Month after month of cajoling, negotiating, bribing, came to naught . . . Summer wore on. The roses grew round the handlebars and the hollyhocks grew back, tall and undisturbed, through the pedals.

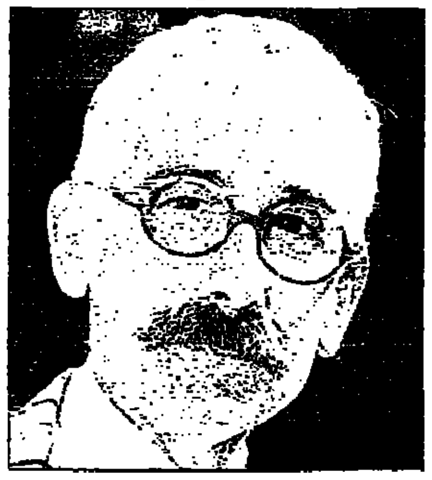
Eventually I gave up and sold it. I could not even explain to the buyer how the pump worked, let alone the unique brakes, as I had never had cause to use either. I warned of the camber on the road, and the tendency to go round in circles. The buyer, a woman with two small children, did not listen. She was hungry for possession. I cashed her cheque immediately. Now we take the bus or stay in.

Practical: but is it cool?

NICK LARSON

Tricycle riding appeals to some, but not all, youngsters

Testing your eco-friendliness may prove a revealing experience



Sir Roy Strong found the going tough

Just how ecologically friendly are you? I must confess that I had no idea, but the EcoCal — your "environmental health test" — promised to take less than an hour to complete (either on paper or, as I did it, on computer disk), after which my answers to 36 questions covering transport, energy, shopping, house size and waste would indicate just how far my meagre existence was helping to wreck planet Earth.

I was emboldened in this eco-quest by *Country Living* magazine, which had asked luminaries such as Jilly Cooper, Sir Roy Strong and Julian Pettifer to go through the test. They had scored 693, 1,220 and 227 respectively. The higher the score, the more wasteful the householder.

The transport section was easy, as — being a motorcyclist — my vehicle's fuel consumption was good. I hardly ever use a car and rarely fly. Soon, though, I was in serious trouble when asked how many gas units I used each quarter. I had absolutely no idea — so it was just as well that you can enter monetary values from quarterly bills instead.

The page on water was a lot easier, involving simply stating how many baths one took a week, and how often I used a dishwasher. Showers are more eco-friendly than baths, of course, but as I haven't got a shower, nor a dishwasher, I guessed I would be rather average in this section.

Shopping was next: how much of my weekly shop originates either from the UK or abroad? I again guessed, thinking that everything else on the food front would be answerable. But it got worse. How much did I spend on food that was transported by air rather than sea? I didn't know this — and how much more wasteful packaging would it take to tell me?

Newspapers I devour, working out my weekly consumption to be over 25, but babies nappies I have, as yet, no use for. As my flat is small and I burn no oil, my eco-credentials were beginning to go to my head.

But next up were questions on recycling, an activity in which, I have to confess, I have never participated. Ditto "environmental and conservation voluntary work" — I was beginning to feel a little hectored and lectured. And yet, when I got through to my final score, I had notched up a rather respectable 241. Maybe it's a sign of growing up when you finish a test and mumble to yourself: "Should have done better".

DAVID LANCASTER

● *EcoCal: tel 0161 2725221; http://www.gfg.iclnet.co.uk*

هكذا من الأهل

Simon Crompton takes a tentative step into the Christmas frontline and emerges weary and still none the wiser

Fantasy shopping for weary troopers

Bashed, bothered and bewildered, you slam the front door behind you and drop the keys and bags to the floor. Your head throbs, your feet ache, your arms have been dislocated from your shoulder sockets, and the insides of your fingers look as if they have been grasping cheese wires.

For the past four hours you have been barged, herded, trodden on, partially asphyxiated, shouted at through a megaphone, ignored, par-boiled, sneezed on and parted from several hundred pounds. You feel knackered, ripped off, suckered and a complete failure. And you think you've caught a cold. Welcome home; you've just been Christmas shopping.

Is it only me that leaves the deed to the last minute not from apathy or bad organisation, but from being frozen by sheer fear? I suspect I am not alone. My paralysed condition precludes any winter shopping activity before sufficient numbers of people have said to me: "Blimey, you'd better get a move on."

Fellow sufferers will share my self-diversionary ploy of finally embarking on the task only by pretending I am actually doing something else.

"Going shopping darling?"

"Oh, um, I just thought I'd take a look at the Regent Street lights."

Dodging dawdlers through the passages of the Underground, I am Gene Hackman in *The French Connection*. Stuck in pedestrian gridlock outside Hamley's, I am more interested in observing human behaviour than getting through to Liberty.

In recent years, I have taken to merging fantasy and reality further, through a mental computer game I have invented. Originally it was called *Rush Hour*, but it has been repackaged and renamed *Hell Hole*, specifically for shopping expeditions.

The object of most computer games is invariably to recover the lost treasure or assassinate the evil tyrant of the planet Ph'thath. But my non-silicon version involves simply getting into the town centre, buying what's on the shopping list, and coming back — alive.

To achieve this, the competitor has to use his special skills of speed and anticipation to negotiate hazards such as congenital slow walkers and groups of Italian tourists blocking main thoroughfares; and to dodge mortal enemies such as irresponsible adults wielding sharp-cornered carrier bags and — most feared of all — mothers with aisle-embracing double baby buggies.

It's a game of pace, where you have to keep your cool even when you are on your third circuit of the china department trying to find the down escalator.

Valuable time and energy can be lost if you don't use your navigational and improvisational abilities to the full, especially when wild card unpredictables, such as Tube delays and security alerts, are thrown in to tear the best-laid plans into shreds.

Most of all, the game is about stamina. Drained by the fruitless search for the unattainable and the retracing of steps as reality dawns and second-best becomes the grail, energy levels on the life meter quickly become critical.

The alternating tropical heat of stores and Arctic cold of streets, along with a recurrent panic that the most important carrier bag has gone missing, also take their toll and a coffee booster pack at Ponti's becomes a necessity.

But the energy expended in the fight for the counter means the "boost" hardly registers, and the flagging competitor decides it is time to opt for the final solution, the do or die option: spend your way out of trouble.

Shuffling into the peaceful and polite backwater of Nicole Farhi, Paul Smith or Asprey, there is a temporary raising of spirits as the competitor feels civilisation's comforts. Then the ceiling crashes in when he casually asks some prices: "Er . . . I was looking for something a little cheaper." Killed by a snooty look, the broken competitor droops into a lifeless heap on the bus seat, pathetically fingering a crushed Porky Pig lampshade and mumbling bitterly all the way home. Game over.

I have no desire to continue playing this game. It has to be wrong that spending large amounts of money — which surely should impart a certain reckless *frisson* — has become a mundane necessity, as thrilling as visiting the dentist.

I am tempted to allow fantasy to take over completely, and step on the magic escalator back to 1930s Hollywood Christmasland, where the right kind of snow falls just enough to sprinkle your shoulders and decorate the window frames, but never enough to slither down your neck or make your nose go bright red.

This is the land James Stewart and Margaret Sullivan strolled through in Ernst Lubitsch's *The Shop Around the Corner*, where everyone does their shopping on Christmas Eve and says "Happy Christmas" to everyone else; a land where you not only find the perfect present in the frosted shop window, but the girl of your dreams. This is where I want to shop — but that way madness lies.

Anyway, Christmas shopping at *my* shop around the corner would result in vinyl-coated drying racks for my wife, some energy-efficient light bulbs for my brother-in-law and a nice jelly mould for my mum. It would not do.

Family and friends would probably be very polite, but I would find it hard to live with the shame, and the suggestion that I thought they didn't really merit much more effort than a ten-minute trip to the local ironmonger's.

But this is perhaps the point. Suffering through shopping has become part of the meaning of Christmas gifts. If my Auntie Joan tells me that my Christmas present was actually bought in April, I have to admit that something inside me is not quite as impressed as if she had been in the thick of the December skirmishes. People know you love them if you're prepared to shop through hell for their sake. Approached that way, perhaps Christmas shopping is not such a pointless game. Ponder on this when the till closes just as you reach it.

Consider it when the shop assistant in the toy department tells you that the perfect gift you've been planning for your child since last Christmas was discontinued in January. And if, at such times, you find the thought helpful and calming, then I have to say you're a better person than I.

INTERNET SHOPS

NEED TO shop but cannot find the time, energy or inclination? You could turn to the Internet for some last-minute gift answers. Search "UK on-line shopping" on your computer and off you go.

It is certainly easy to shop confidently for smaller purchases, such as music CDs and tapes, videos and books. An increasing number of high-street names have been scrambling to get in on the on-line ordering act, having seen comparatively unknown Internet outlets do booming sales in the past few years.

HMV is the latest big name to open an Internet order site. Two established UK-based sites are iMS and iBS, Internet Music Shop (musicshop.co.uk) and Internet Book Shop (bookshop.co.uk) respectively. Orders run smoothly and the postal dispatch of goods is prompt. Small charges for postage and packing are usually added to Internet orders.

The main thing to remember is that whatever you do order from the convenience of your armchair needs to be delivered to your home. So if you plan to Internet shop because you work long hours, don't forget you may need to be home to receive your order if it is too big to slip through your letterbox (hence the popularity of slim goods like tapes, videos and books).

A MUCH broader site is Classic England (classicengland.co.uk) which brings together produce and products from throughout the Britain. Here you can find everything from "Classic Antiques" to "Classic Toys". Head for "Classic Gourmet" and a virtual food hall opens up where you can get Christmas hampers, seafood specialities, even oven-ready geese and turkeys. In most cases orders can be placed on-line but, if not, phone and fax ordering details are given.

Since last-day posting deadlines loom, it is always worth checking that your order will be delivered in time for the holiday.

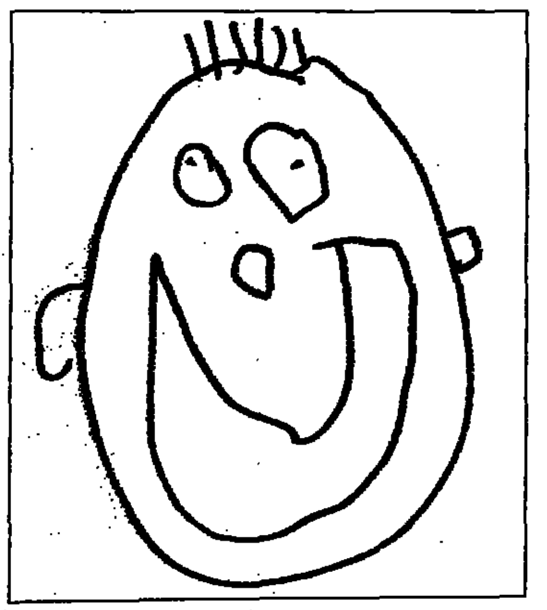
But if all this talk of technology is too much to bear, why not enlist the services of a personal shopper to do it for you? Colour Me Beautiful (0171-720 5097) has more than 200 consultants nationwide who, after an initial consultation, will do all your Christmas shopping, including finding the perfect party outfit. Prices start at £35 an hour.

TIM WAPSHOTT

Madeleine Kingsley meets a boy who is able to express his happiness for the first time

A smile for Christmas

David Meiklem before the surgery



MARTIN GILFEATHER

David, with mother Fiona, can manage a distinctive grin. Left, his touching illustration of the Christmas gift he wanted most of all

Most parents wait six weeks for their child's first smile. Fiona and Colin Meiklem from Lanarkshire waited seven years for David's dimpled grin, the man-made result of innovative and, some might say, controversial, surgery.

David was born with Moebius syndrome, an extremely rare cluster of disabilities of which an expressionless face is the most marked and, socially at least, the most distressing symptom.

Only 127 people in the UK are known to be affected, which is no doubt why the blank mask of sufferers is so unfamiliar and so readily taken to mean, as Colin Meiklem puts it: "That there's nothing much up there." David belies any such snap impression. He wants to be a doctor, devours Aztec history and stumps you with questions such as, "Why do people come with different coloured eyes?"

One in ten Moebius children will have learning difficulties, but far more have eye and speech problems. Some, like David, cannot blink; others find it hard to close their mouths or even their eyes to sleep. But the emotional tragedy for sufferers is that, unless they can adjust to a world that cannot "read" them facially, they may grow up as very lonely adults.

Karen Rosher, 36, an auxiliary nurse and mother of three children from Staines in Surrey, has overlaid her Moebius with such force of personality that when she showed her wedding photos to friends, "it was the first time they noticed I wasn't smiling".

Yet Hayley Teddington, an opera buff and crossword devotee from Ramsgate in Kent, looks back on "40 years of torment — and adolescence without fun, followed by ten years of hell working in an Army typing pool. Colleagues didn't want to know me and they brought people in from other departments to laugh and stare."

After David's diagnosis at ten days old, Fiona spiralled into depression "though I told no one, not even Colin, for ages. I felt I ought to cope with things, like 98 hospital visits in David's first year. I found it hard to tell people outside the immediate family."

The cloud lifted when David was four and a half, when he was judged able to manage mainstream education. "He was hard for teachers to assess," says Colin, "because he didn't give the appearance of being a bright child. Physical tasks — even holding a pencil — were hard, and his speech wasn't clear. Yet he was way ahead with his reading. It was a wonderful moment when we heard his teacher say that David was one of the most rewarding children she had ever taught."

David could at least show his parents how he felt through body language. "He learnt from about three to tell us verbally when he was excited or sad," says Fiona.

So when, aged five, he began to use crayons "and straight away drew thousands of smiley faces", David was making his own poignant point. "Once he started school," says Fiona, "he noticed more and more that he was different."

"Why am I not happy?" he repeatedly asked his parents. "He'd go to the mirror and pull his lips up with both hands," says Fiona.

Until recently, acceptance of that absent smile would have been the only course. But a couple of years ago, Colin caught a television news item about Douglas Harrison, a plastic surgeon who was already pioneering symmetrical "smile surgery" for Moebius sufferers at Mount Vernon Hospital in Northwood, Middlesex.

Mr Harrison emphasises that his surgery supplies the face with the power to smile — but not the impulse to the brain that makes the rest of us smile without thought. Patients such as David must not only practise using their acquired smile until it appears natural, but learn to produce it on cue.

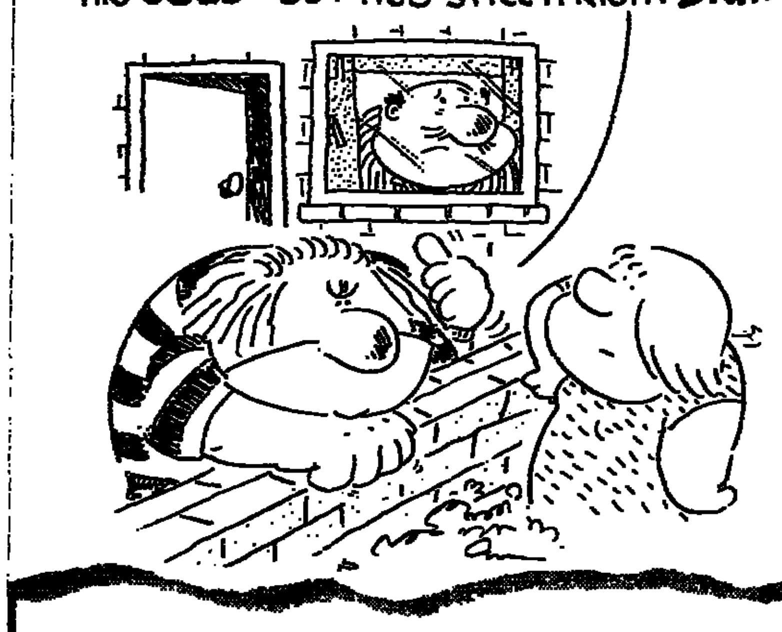
"We were glad of the 18-month-long NHS waiting list, because at five David really wasn't up to making the important decision to go ahead with surgery. At seven he was much more able to understand what was involved," Fiona says. Above all, though, it was David's conviction that surgery was what he wanted that swung them.

Ten weeks after the first operation he managed his first glimmer of a lopsided smile. It took a full year for David's mouth to settle into its full, gleeful monty.

It will be a long time before anyone can assess the true impact of David's smile on his future relationships, but their bold choice has paid off. "We knew it was worthwhile the day we took David shopping and he couldn't wait to show off his new beam. 'See,' he tells everyone he knows. 'I can be happy now.'"

● *The Moebius Support Group is run by Linda Anderson (0191-253 2090).*

HÖFELS **GARLIC** AND **PARSLEY** HELPED HIS **COLD** – BUT HE'S STILL A RIGHT **DRIP**



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Everyone feels under the weather when they've got a cold. And sometimes there's no sympathy either. Fortunately Höfels Garlic & Parsley – a traditional herbal remedy – can help stop colds getting you down, by helping to relieve the symptoms *naturally*. Garlic and Parsley have traditionally benefited generations of users, and now with Höfels Garlic and Parsley, those benefits are available in a convenient, one a day formulation, that's easy to take all winter long. Help drips dry this winter with Höfels Garlic and Parsley.

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SEVEN SEAS Health Care

What will your house be worth?

House price rises are slowing but there is still room for optimism, says **Rachel Kelly**

Average house prices will rise by around 5 per cent next year, according to a panel of experts consulted by *The Times*. For once, we can have some confidence in their views. Their predictions of what would happen to the market this year have proved uncannily and unusually accurate.

They expect prices at the top end of the market in London to slow down next year, rising by around 2 per cent, according to Savills. Higher levels of stamp duty on houses worth more than £250,000 and an over-correction after dramatic price rises this year are expected to take their toll.

From next April, buyers of houses worth up to £60,000 are exempt from stamp duty; those buying houses over £60,000 have to pay 1 per cent stamp duty; those buying houses over £250,000 have to pay 1.5 per cent; and those buying over £500,000 have to pay 2 per cent.

The number of sales is expected to increase to 1.5 million in 1998, up from 1.35 million this year.

Sue Anderson of the Council of Mortgage Lenders says: "There is no fear in the market, but also no rapid rise in prices. Houses have become less of an 'investment good' and more of a 'consumer good', making the market less volatile."

Two factors could destabilise the market: rising mortgage rates and the contents of the second Labour Budget. But the Government is as keen on a steady housing market as anyone else, with targets for low inflation and low interest rates. A tough spending round next year may hit some of the existing props that support home ownership, such as mortgage interest tax relief and income support for the unemployed unable to meet their mortgage payments. Next year will be the real test of the Government's true attitude to housing.

This year, both the Halifax and the Nationwide reported house price rises of around 7 per cent. Only the most expensive property, in prime areas such as Kensington, Chelsea and Belgravia, out-performed predictions — in some cases by as much 40 per cent.

GENERAL

Sue Anderson, Council of Mortgage Lenders

"We expected price rises of 5 to 10 per cent this year, and transactions to total about 1.35 million (an increase of 13 per cent). This now looks to have been reasonably accurate. However, the market has not performed in a similar way throughout the country — the averages mask huge differences on a regional basis.

"Next year, we expect a relatively stable market. Prices are set to continue to rise, but the extent is likely to be limited to between 5 and 6 per cent as a result of more properties coming on the market because sellers are no longer holding out for higher prices.

"Higher mortgage rates, the imposition of the higher rate of stamp duty and the reduction in mortgage tax relief to 10 per cent will also slightly dampen demand."

Gary Marsh of the Halifax

"We predicted a rise in prices of 7 per cent in 1997 and a 12 per cent increase in sales. This is likely to be slightly on the high side for prices but pessimistic for transactions.

"We expect the current solid recovery in the housing market to continue in 1998 and 1999 with house prices rising by about 5 per cent in both years and levels of sales stabilising at around 1.5 million in England and Wales."

LUXURY HOMES

William Gething of Property Vision

"We estimated rises of 10 per cent, whereas prices increased by double that. We underestimated the significant effect of City bonuses at the start of 1997, which injected several hundred million pounds into the central London market.

"Much of this was directed towards family houses in Kensington, where there have been price rises of more than 30 per cent.

"The impact of South East Asian buyers purchasing whole blocks of flats was also significant.

"The knock-on effect on the country market was considerable, with prices rising 25 per cent for good family houses. Not only is this market fuelled by the high prices achieved in London, but we have also noticed an increasingly international market for good country houses to the west of London.

"We will see a more subdued market next year, with the exception of a surge driven by City bonuses at the start of 1998. The downward cycle in South East Asian economies will curtail international demand.

"I predict an early surge but then a flat market for the rest of the year."

NEW HOMES

David Mote of the House Builders' Foundation:

"Our forecasts of 7 per cent price inflation and 15 per cent growth in sales in 1997 have both been exceeded. Demand did not weaken as much as expected before the election and then bounced back strongly on the back of a remarkable rise in consumer confidence.

"We expect growth in sales and prices, particularly in London and the South East, to slow down.

"Nevertheless, the recovery is sustainable and prices will rise by up to 4 per cent in many parts of the country in line with employment growth and rises in disposable incomes.

"New housebuilding is increasingly constrained by planning restrictions and delays that have caused a shortage of land. This has reached crisis point for the South East where, despite the profitable conditions offered by price increases and serious shortages of second-hand property, the number of new homes has increased at a rate well below the national average."

COUNTRY HOUSES

Rupert Sweeting of Knight Frank

"We forecast rises of up to 10 per cent for the country house market as a whole. The trend nationally has been an increase of 10 per cent to 15 per cent while the market for the best houses has shown rises in some cases of 25 per cent. The larger rises have been localised.

"Next year, a continuing strong economy, low interest rates and large City bonuses will help to drive prices for the best properties up 15 per cent and for the market as a whole up 10 per cent. The lack of supply of houses coupled with increased demand have helped to drive prices up."

LONDON

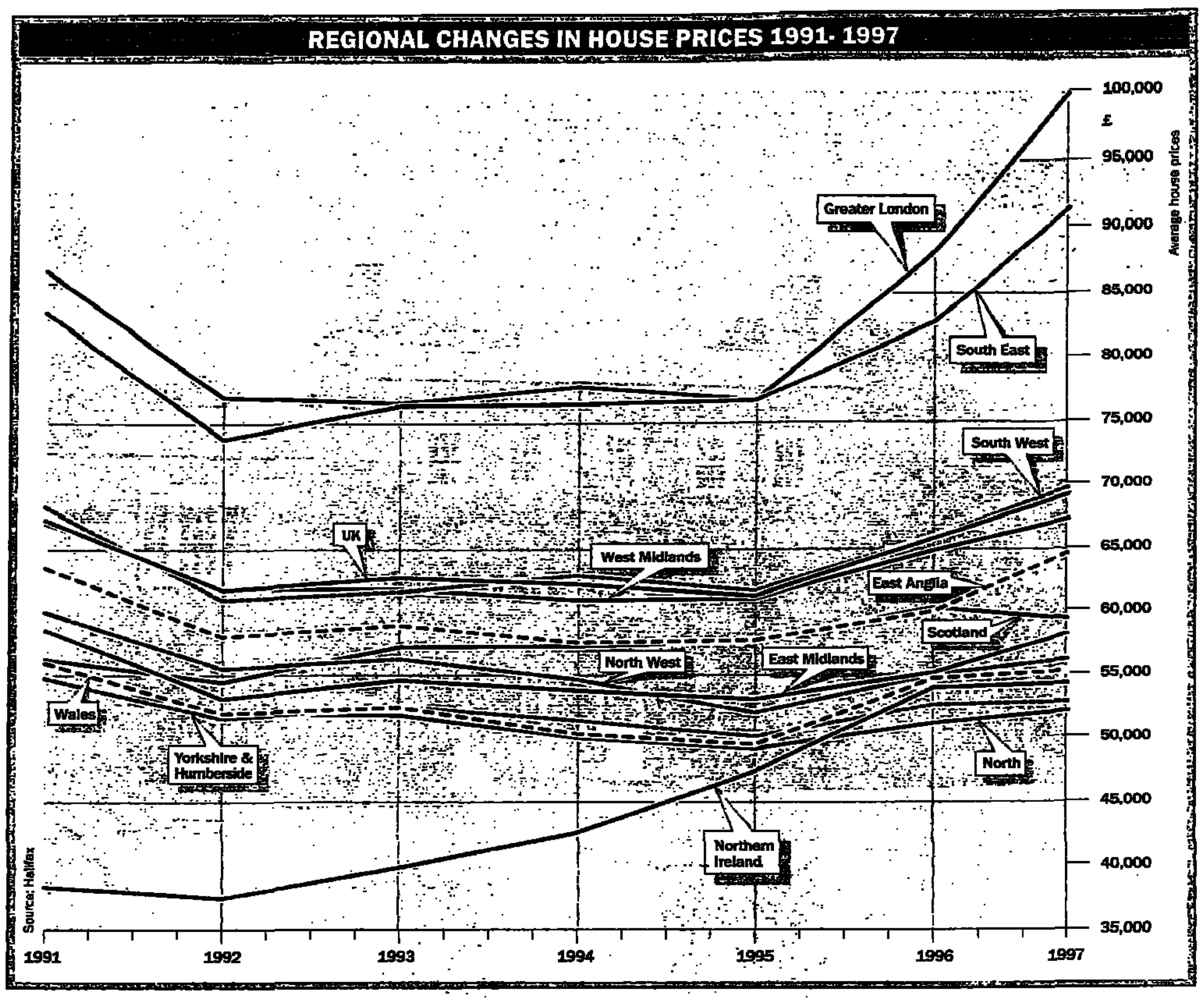
Simon Agace, chairman of Winkworth

"We predicted an average 15 per cent rise across London with some areas like Islington showing above-average growth of 25 per cent or more. We got it wrong. Between September 1996 through to July 1997, prices of prime Islington property rose by 50 per cent.

"Further growth is largely dependent on the economy and interest-rate hikes. If the base rate rises above 8 per cent, the London market may falter. Stock market troubles have led to a more cautious market.

"On balance, I would expect average price growth of between 6 per cent and 8 per cent, with prime property in central London experiencing lower growth of 4 per cent. Increased availability across all price ranges will continue to provide excellent opportunities for all buyers."

REGIONAL CHANGES IN HOUSE PRICES 1991- 1997



Source: Halifax

SMART MOVES

- **SIR EVELYN** de Rothschild, chairman of NM Rothschild, has bought a property in Chesham Place, Belgravia, London SW1 for £10 million through Knight Frank.

- **THE** American Ambassador Philip Lader is renting a large white stucco house in Holland Park while his official residence, Winfield House in Regent's Park, is being refurbished.

Evelyn de Rothschild

- **HEATHER MILLS**, the model and TV presenter who lost half of her leg in Kensington road accident, has recently bought a flat in Soho, exchanging contracts in less than 48 hours through the agents LDG of Mayfair. Ms Mills founded the Bosnian children's charity the Heather Mills Trust.

Heather Mills

- **TONY SMITH**, manager of Genesis and Phil Collins, has bought a newly-built £5 million house in Ladbroke Terrace off Notting Hill Gate, west London.

EDGE STREET, W8. Freehold £545,000
A charming two storey period cottage in good decorative order with a garage and a large roof terrace. 3 bedrooms, bathroom, reception room and kitchen.
KENSINGTON OFFICE: 0171 727 0705

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BOXING DAY QUIZ

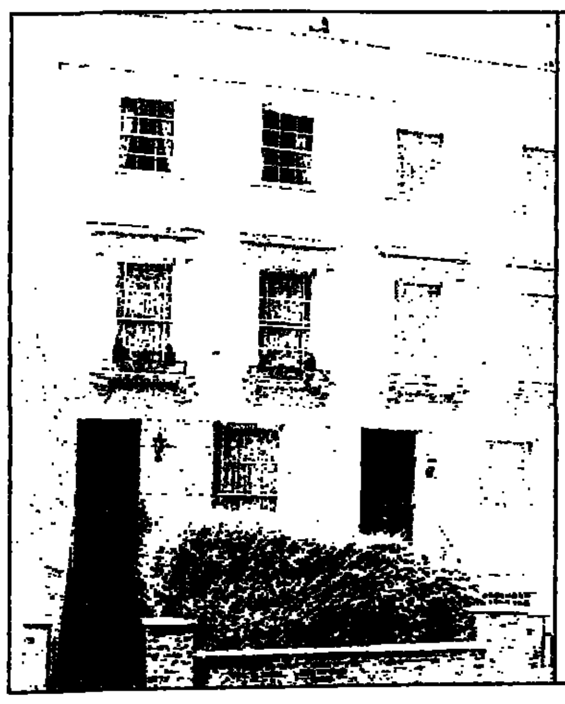
Gather the family, put a log on the fire and see how many of the 120 questions of general knowledge you can answer.

Brain teasers selected by : Sir Paul Condon QPM, Dick Francis, Bamber Gascoigne, Bob Holness, Magnus Magnusson KBE, Leo McKern, Helen Mirren, Ruth Rendell, Dame Stella Rimington DCB, Robert Robinson, John Sessions and Irene Thomas.

And the added pleasure of giving £10 to an exceptional cause.

To order: 0171 269 3106

OXFORDSHIRE – Charndon Price Guide: £285,000
An impressive listed 17th century house with extensive views over open countryside to the rear. 5 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, shower room, 3 reception rooms: kitchen, hall, utility room, book room, cloakroom and gardens of about 0.12 ha (0.3 acres).
OXFORD OFFICE: 01865 311522



ST ANN'S TERRACE, NW8.

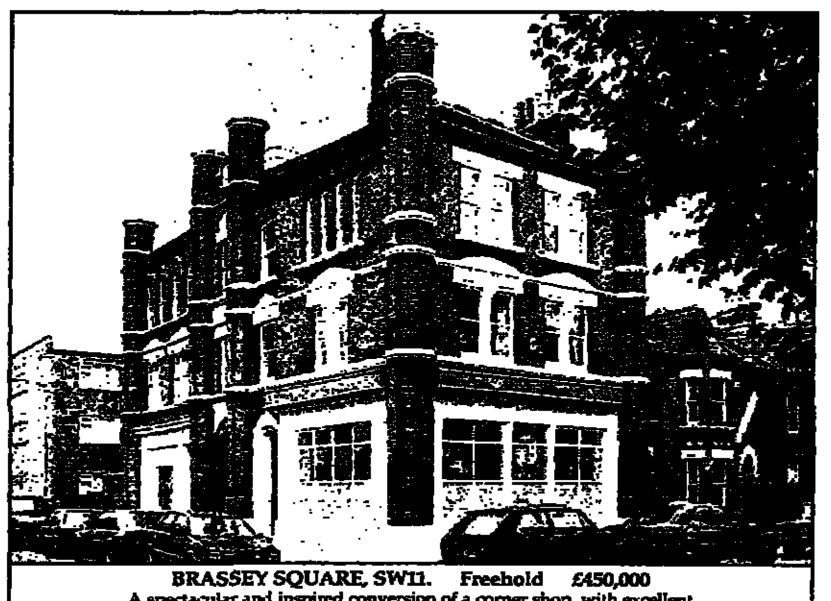
In the centre of St John's Wood, a period house in excellent decorative order.

3 bedrooms, dressing room, 2 bathrooms, 4 reception rooms, kitchen, front and rear gardens.

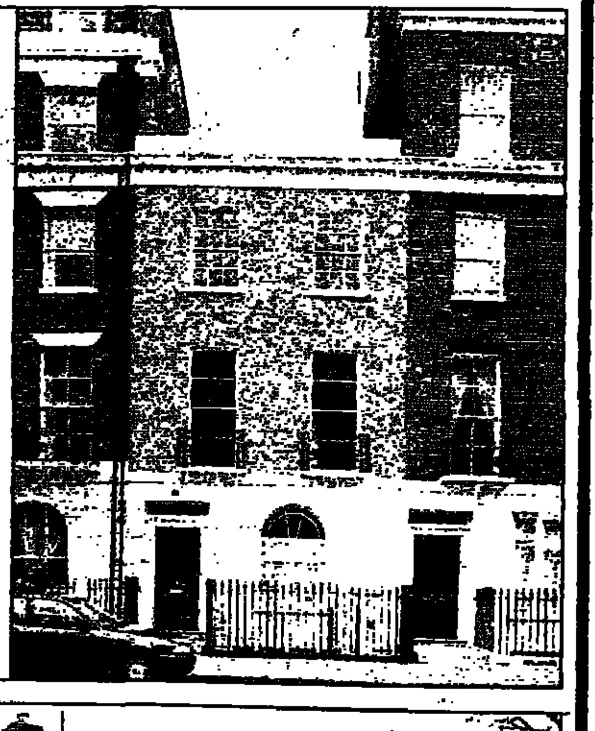
Freehold

£745,000

ST JOHN'S WOOD OFFICE: 0171 722 5556



BRASSEY SQUARE, SW11. Freehold £450,000
A spectacular and inspired conversion of a corner shop, with excellent entertaining space, on the Shaftesbury Estate. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, reception room, galleried dining area and kitchen.
BATTERSEA OFFICE: 0171 228 0174



EBURY STREET, SW1.

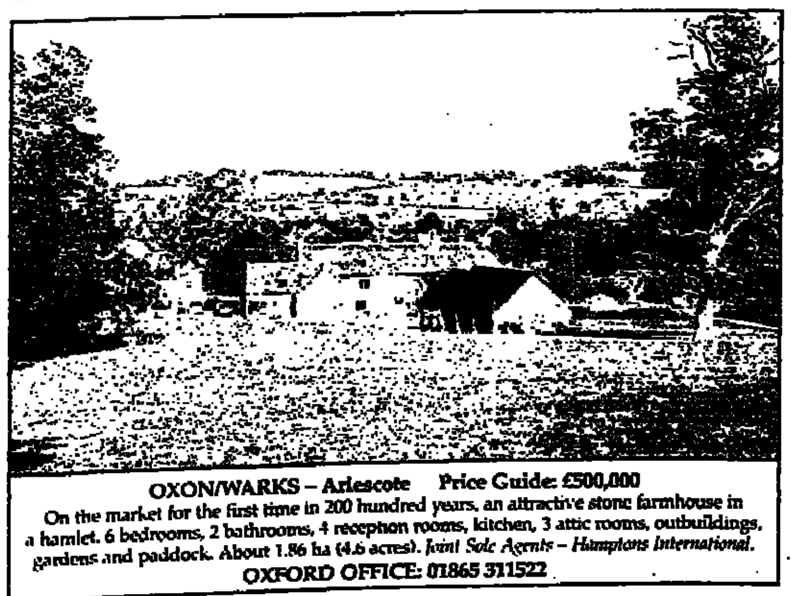
A newly refurbished period house arranged over four floors, with a garden and a first floor drawing room.

3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 2 reception rooms, kitchen and 2 cloakrooms.

Lease to 2095

£695,000

BELGRAVIA OFFICE: 0171 730 9854



OXON/WARKS – Arlescote Price Guide: £500,000
On the market for the first time in 200 hundred years, an attractive stone farmhouse in a hamlet. 6 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 4 reception rooms, kitchen, 3 attic rooms, outbuildings, gardens and paddock. About 1.86 ha (4.6 acres). *Joint Sole Agents – Hamptons International.*
OXFORD OFFICE: 01865 311522

LETTINGS AND MANAGEMENT
To let your house or flat: Central London 0171-491 4311
North London 0171-722 3336 Wimbledon & Surrey 0181-946 9447
South of the M4 01730 829 899 North of the M4 01865 311522

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CHELSEA:	0171 352 1484	FARNHAM:	01252 737115
FULHAM:	0171 731 4223	LYMINGTON:	01590 677233
KENSINGTON:	0171 727 0705	NEWBURY:	01635 523225
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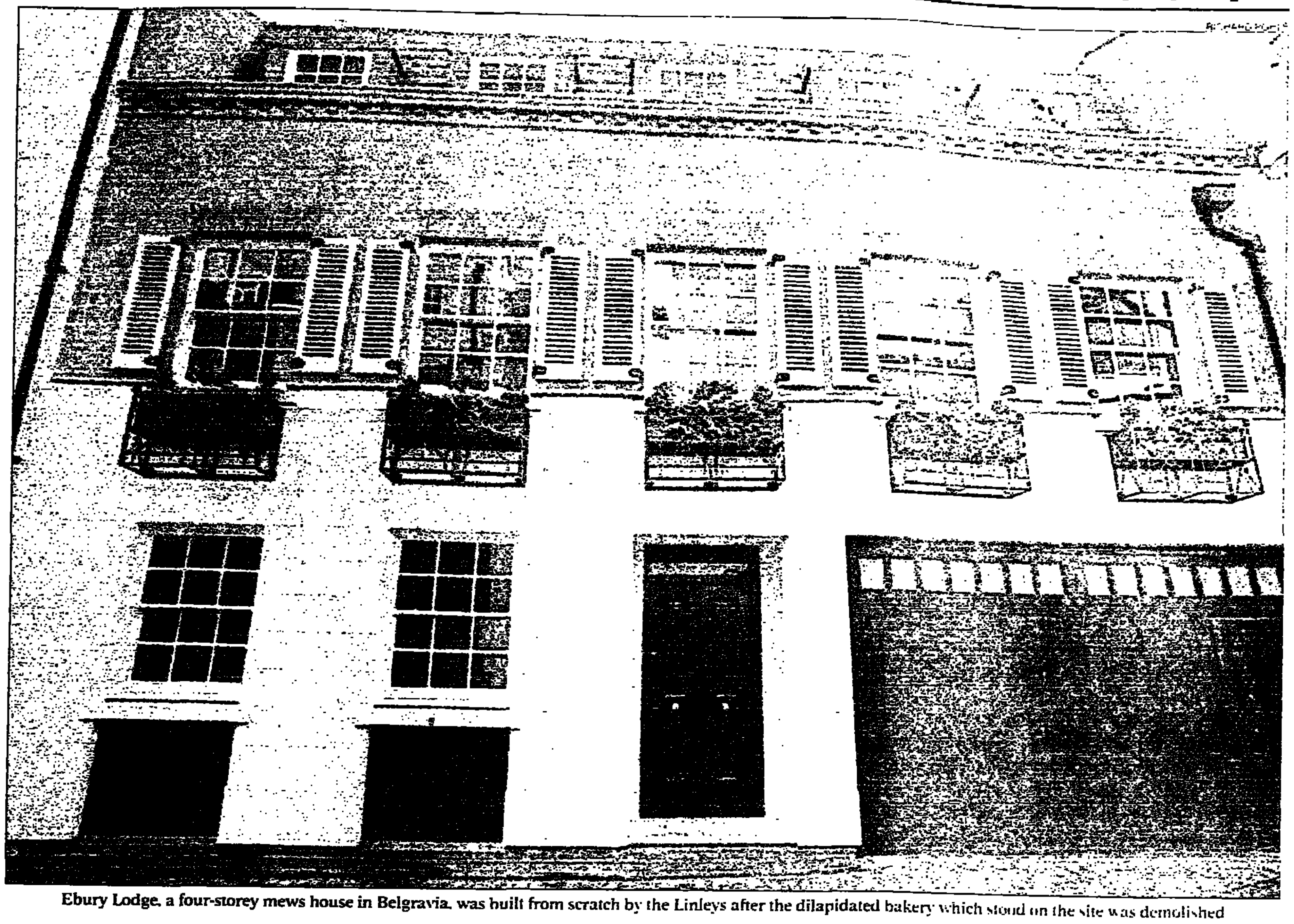
The house that Viscount Linley built but never lived in is for sale for £3.65m. **Gill Martin** reports

CAMERA PRESS

Have I got mews for you

HOUSE OF THE WEEK


Ebury Lodge, a four-storey mews house in Belgravia, was built from scratch by the Linleys after the dilapidated bakery which stood on the site was demolished

They can't hang a blue plaque on the wall of Ebury Lodge proclaiming "Viscount Linley lived here" because he never took up residence in his dream home.

But he did have the vision to spot the site, a dilapidated bakery in Belgravia, have it pulled down and replaced with a four-storey double mews house.

It is now on the market for £3.65 million, which should mean a tidy profit for the furniture-maker son of Princess Margaret and Lord Snowden. And, although David Linley, 36, and his artist wife Lady Serena, 27, never occupied the house, it boasts three of his fireplaces.

One graces the ground floor study, which is furnished with a Linley desk in ebony, burr oak and sycamore, a Linley wine cooler and walnut candlesticks.

The other two fireplaces take pride of place at either end of the 33ft-wide drawing room on the first floor. These are fashioned in light oak, with little ebony roundels and a black marble hearth.

"Two fireplaces? Why not?" says Linley. "You can imagine coming in the door, turning left to a sofa in front of the fire, somewhere quiet to sit; or turning right to another sofa where you can watch telly or play games. It makes the best of the room."

Other items of Linley furniture on view include a burr walnut dining table, sycamore bedroom chairs with cherry inlays, and doorstops. "We're in the business of selling furniture so I'm sure we can come to some arrangement if the house buyer wants the furniture," he says.

The Linleys have had a fascinating array of accommodation in their five years of marriage. When David wed Serena in 1993 they occupied a flat in a former prison in fashionable Fulham, south-west London. Rush-hour commuting to his shop, David Linley Furniture, in Pimlico Road, Belgravia, was too tiresome, so he found the ideal position in the cobbled Ebury Mews, just three blocks away.

During the lengthy process — planning permission, demolition, designing by architect David Rosemont, rebuilding ("the foundations go down 65ft, enough to hold up the entire mews") and decor by Lucy Manners, the Duke of Rutland's neice — the Linleys received an offer they couldn't refuse for their Fulham pad.

So they camped out in Kensington Palace for six months and then, impatient for Ebury Lodge to be completed, they fell in love with a spacious loft conversion in a Victorian school building in Battersea.

Linley won't say how much he stands to make from the sale of the elegant, air-conditioned Ebury Lodge, with its five en-suite bedrooms, roof terrace, nanny flat, atrium and patio garden with fountain.

But he denies he bought it as property speculation. "Absolutely not. It was great to build our dream house from the ground up and put in everything as we would like it. We gave the broad brush strokes to the architect, who carried out the detailed work. It was to be our family home," he says.

Yes, *family* home. But he resists any questions about the impending patter of tiny feet. "As soon as we got married people started asking when were we having children," he protests. So the nursery remains superfluous to requirements, as does the basement gym. "We don't work out," says Linley. "We're quite active enough without using machines, although I'm sure things will change in ten years' time.".

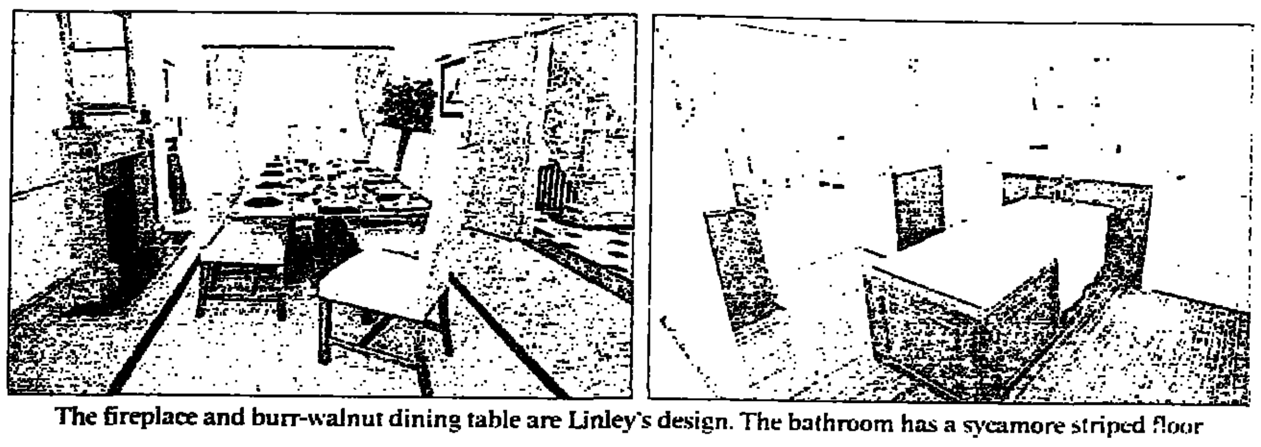
Linley spends much of his time driving to workshops in Wales, Whitby, Norfolk and Dorset. "It would be nice to arrive home and always find somewhere to park. There are four parking spaces."

Had the couple taken up residence they could have enjoyed a kitchen stuffed with an Amana fridge-freezer, Smeg hob, Atag extractor, Bosch dishwasher, oven and microwave. "The sad thing is that someone will rip things out and start again," he says.

French windows and an octagonal skylight flood light into the adjoining informal dining area, where Serena also planned to sculpt and paint. The en-suite bathroom, leading from the master bedroom, overlooks Chester Square church. It has a striped mahogany and sycamore floor that looks like a yacht deck, and a whirlpool bath with blue lights.

"That, I'm afraid, is nothing to do with me or Serena or our lifestyle," says Linley pointedly. "It was put in when we realised we were going to sell the house."

● *Agent: Savills, SW1 (0171-730 0822).*

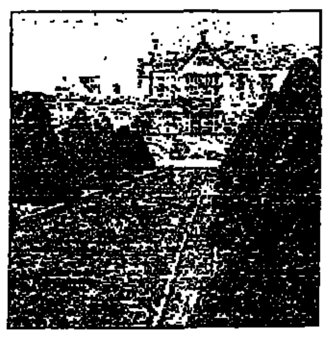

The fireplace and burr-walnut dining table are Linley's design. The bathroom has a sycamore striped floor

The master bedroom. All five bedrooms at Ebury Lodge have en-suite facilities

DESIGNERS' DREAM HOMES

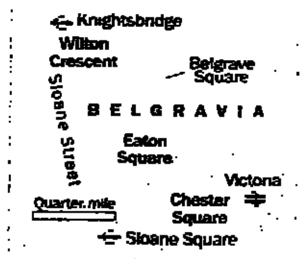
Andrew Varah, the cabinet-maker, lives with his wife Helen and daughter Alice in a 16th-century farmhouse near Rugby, Warwickshire. The property, bought in 1972 for £16,000, was rebuilt, with tradesmen paid in items of furniture.

Ross Lovegrove, the furniture designer, lives with his wife, Miska, an architect, and son in a converted warehouse above their studio in Notting Hill, west London. The 1950s former leather warehouse was bought in 1991 and rebuilt into a three-bedroom Modernist house.



John Makepeace, OBE, the designer and furniture maker, lives with his wife, Jennie, in Parnham House, near Beaminster, Dorset. The Grade I listed house, which dates back to the 15th century, has 80 rooms and has been converted into a school for craftsmen in wood.

MARKET COMMENT



BELGRAVIA has long been one of the best London districts, but despite its cachet, the area is not to everyone's taste. It is a genteel, heavily residential area with little commercial use, and it lacks the atmosphere of buzzier enclaves such as Chelsea or even Knightsbridge. As a consequence it attracts wealthy but middle-aged UK and foreign buyers looking for the combination of relative peace and a prime central London address. The attractions are obvious. The huge stucco-fronted houses, built in the 1840s, are among the grandest in town, the King's Road is a ten-minute walk away, as are many of London's top hotels; the West End is a short cab ride away, and the caterers can always pop out to Harrods food hall for those last-minute necessities.

Of course, one pays through the nose for such a neighbourhood, and for the architectural glory and sheer scale of the properties. However, many have relatively short leases, which can detract from their saleability, and there is also a general shortage of garage space and gardens. Indeed, Andrew Langton of estate agents Aylesford is among those who consider that other parts of London may have stolen the baton from Belgravia. He cites the Boltons in Chelsea as an area where values have outstripped those of Belgravia.

Eaton Square, despite heavy traffic, is considered the most desirable address. Most of its houses have been converted into apartments, and even the cheapest flat on the shortest lease fetches £300,000-plus. Houses there have sold for as much as £20 million. Next on the list is Chester Square, which is dominated by houses valued from £2.5 to £4 million, followed by Wilton Crescent, where one long-lease house is on the market at £7 million. As a rule of thumb, says Mr Langton, expect to pay around £1,000 per sq ft for the best apartments, and £800 per sq ft for houses in Belgravia. But he adds a note of warning: the upkeep of these houses is a pricey business and service charges can be as much as £20,000 per year.

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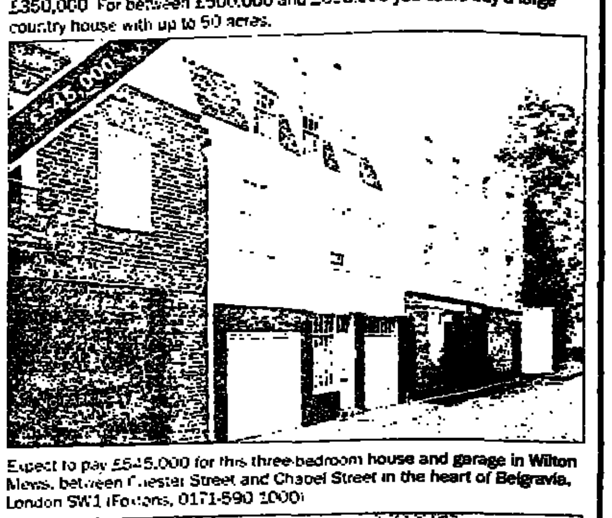
HOMESWAP

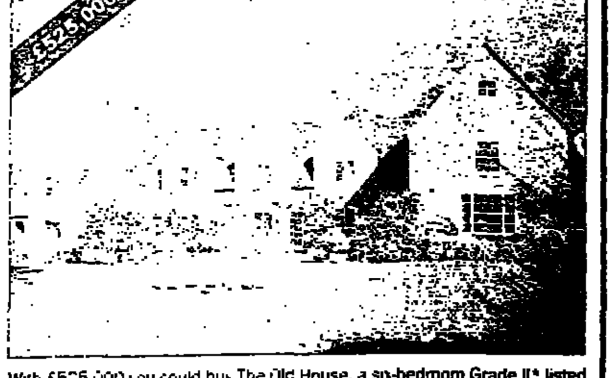
LONDON MEWS houses have shot up in value this year, outrunning the mainstream market. Prices of freehold mews houses in Kensington and Knightsbridge in the range £400,000 to £700,000 rose 30 per cent or more in the first six months of 1997, but have since fallen back. Demand has been led partly by tougher parking restrictions in the capital: "When we value a mews house, garage space is as expensive as the living area," says Antoine Lurot, of Lurot Brand, the London Mews Company.

Demand from London buyers looking for family homes in Gloucestershire has driven prices up 15 per cent this year, according to Knight Frank. Country houses in the £350,000 to £500,000 bracket, which buys a renovated 200-year-old Cotswold stone farmhouse with paddocks, are highly sought-after and in short supply. Popular areas include the Coln Valley, around Bibury and Quenington, 30 minutes drive from Swindon, an hour from Paddington by fast train.

There has been no property boom in Herefordshire. However, good country houses are being snapped up by London emigrés and prices are rising. Popular areas include Ross-on-Wye and Ledbury, where you can buy a four-bedroom Georgian village house for between £200,000 and £250,000. A six-bedroom period rectory, on the edge of a village, will cost around £350,000. For between £500,000 and £650,000 you could buy a large country house with up to 50 acres.



Expect to pay £545,000 for this three-bedroom house and garage in Wilton Mews, between Chester Street and Chapel Street in the heart of Belgravia, London SW1 (Foxtons, 0171-590 2000)



With £525,000 you could buy The Old House, a six-bedroom Grade II* listed medieval hall, at Frampton on Severn, Gloucestershire, adjoining open fields and overlooking a peaceful village green (Knight Frank, 01285 659771).

For the same sort of money you could buy Wigmore Abbey in Wigmore, Herefordshire, a Grade I listed house with 12th-century origins, with five acres of garden, pasture and paddocks. It has six reception rooms and eight bedrooms, traditional outbuildings and a medieval gatehouse (Knight Frank, 01432 273087).

CHERYL TAYLOR

Houses that pay for themselves

Instead of bringing home the bacon, couples are now serving it to paying guests. Adam Barker reports

A recent report by the Employers' Forum has finally proved that "downsizing" is not just a phrase invented by the media. The report calculates that, between 1990 and 1995, Britain's top 12 companies cut their workforce on average by 44 per cent.

As house prices in London and other big cities approach peaks unseen since the boom of the late 1980s, for many people this is the right time to flee the rat race before they become further additions to the report's depressing statistics.

Running a bed and breakfast in the countryside can be the perfect antidote to years of accumulated city stress, and many families have done exactly that, heading away from the urban sprawl to set themselves up in business and at the same time taking on a completely new lifestyle.

> 'We now have so much spare time for ourselves . . . we feel a real part of village life'

When Mary and Tony Dakin moved into the Old Parsonage in the village of Frant in East Sussex in 1989, their motivation was simple. As Mrs Dakin puts it: "We bought this house so that we could change our lives."

It certainly did that. Before the move, Mr and Mrs Dakin lived in nearby Edenbridge and commuted daily to PR jobs in London. Their new nine-bedroom house cost around £500,000 and was built in 1820 by the Marquis of Abergavenny for his son, a local rector. The Dakins are the first non-clerics to live there.

Mrs Dakin says: "When we first moved in, the house was a complete shambles. The garden was a jungle and we had to evict squatters from the house itself before we could start renovation work."

But since that uncertain beginning, their lifestyle has definitely improved. Says Mrs Dakin: "We now have so much spare time for ourselves and our seven and nine-year-old sons. Tony has become a keen amateur photographer and I spend a lot of time making tapestries. For the first time we feel a real part of village life."

Running bed and breakfast accommodation can have its unexpected rewards. Last year the Dakins spent their holiday in North Carolina courtesy of some American guests with whom they struck up a friendship. And when the Dakins' nine-year-old son needed some help with his school space project, they were able to call upon a former guest who worked at Nasa. At Christmas, the family receives cards and presents from all over the world.

For Robin and Ann Palmer, owners of the Yorkshire Rose guest house in Settle, North Yorkshire, the hardest part was finding a base for their first B&B.

Mrs Palmer recalls that they drove more than 3,500 miles across the length and breadth of Yorkshire before finding their dream B&B, an old doctor's house in Settle. Everything fell into place after that for the 63-year-old former miner and his wife, a former nurse.

Brian and Everyl Maddell, who purchased Waterford House in Middleham, North Yorkshire, in 1988, see the other benefits of moving into the B&B business.

"The best part of our business is getting to live in this wonderful old house with beautiful antique furniture. We would never be able to afford to live somewhere so grand, certainly not anywhere near London," says Mrs Maddell. With five letting bedrooms, the Maddell home now pays for itself.

RICHARD RAYNER

Everyl and Brian Maddell: "The best part is getting to live in this wonderful old house"

Then there are the amusing moments that often arise when cultures collide. "Americans are the oddest nationality we have to stay," says Mrs Palmer. "We have had some of them bringing their own waffles for breakfast, and one gentleman pointed at the Dales above Settle and asked my husband 'Who built these wonderful hills?' "

While running a B&B is largely a positive experience, there are a few drawbacks the novices must become accustomed to — a lack of privacy, for example.

Mrs Dakin admits that guests can sometimes intrude into family life. "Some people are quite insensitive about our personal space and barge into the kitchen without knocking," she says.

But on the whole, managing a rural bed and breakfast provides an attractive lifestyle for a downsizer. And there are more than enough memories of happy customers and complimentary reviews in guide books and the press to compensate for the occasional tiresome guest.

- *Ann and Robin Palmer, the Yorkshire Rose Guest House, Settle, North Yorkshire (01792 822032).*
- *Mary and Tony Dakin, the Old Parsonage, Frant, East Sussex (01892 750773).*

CASE STUDY

■ For Brian and Everyl Maddell, the benefits of downsizing lay in acquiring a unique and lovely property. Their home, Waterford House in the North Yorkshire village of Middleham, has six bedrooms, six bathrooms, two sitting rooms, a barn and two walled gardens.

■ Mr Maddell bought the house for £159,000 in 1988, which was then the price of a smart three-bedroom flat in Battersea. The Middleham home is now worth between £250,000 and £300,000. Tens of thousands of pounds have been lavished on the property. Period furniture is really the only option for an early 19th-century house, with beams dating back to the time of Richard III, whose castle stands 100 or so metres away.

■ For two sharing a room with breakfast at Waterford House, the Maddells charge around £70. With an evening meal, guests would spend between £140 and £200 for the night.

- *Brian and Everyl Maddell, Waterford House, Middleham, North Yorkshire (01969 622090).*

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هكذا من الأصل

CHARLES JENCKS

Physics strikes a balance with nature among the double-waved earthworks and curving ponds

Unearthing the seeds of chaos theory

Dazzled by dynamics and blinded by science, **Jane Owen** visits a verdant monument to complex theory and fine-tuned physics

ME AND MY GARDEN: CHARLES JENCKS

Charles Jencks, who defined post-Modernism and tangled with the Prince of Wales over architectural philosophy, is having horizontal gene transfer theory explained to him by scientists Mae Wan Ho and Peter Saunders. How, Mr Jencks wonders aloud, can this be expressed in his DNA garden?

Mr Saunders suggests the tennis ball ejecting machine should be moved out of the tennis court (aka the Fair Play garden) and left to shoot across the lettuces, sculptures, thistles, paths and mound which denote various aspects of DNA in the Physics garden (as opposed to the medieval physick gardens).

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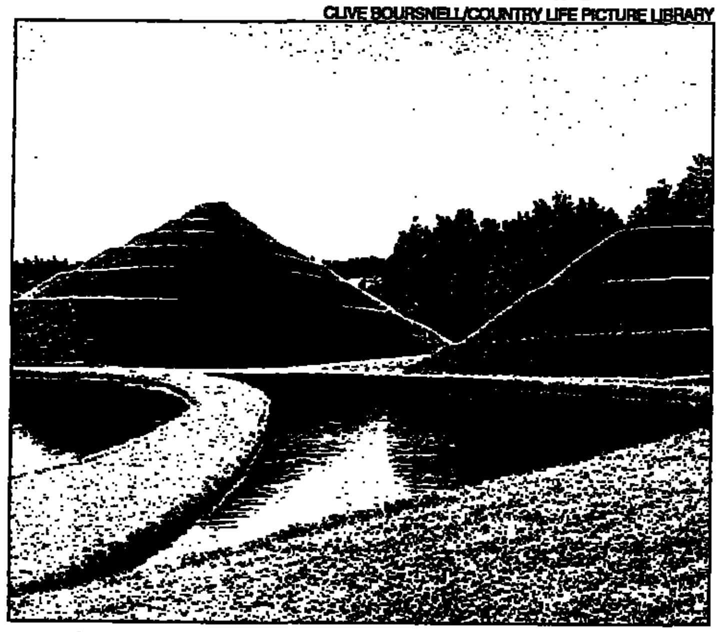


Freshly manicured, the pathways are a triumph of technique

This is part of a 300-acre estate on the Scottish borders where Mr Jencks, the American thinker and architect, together with his late wife Maggie Keswick, the expert on Chinese gardens, thumbed through chaos theory, soliton waves, genetics, physics and feng shui to come up with a unique landscape. Not since Capability Brown has anyone been so bold.

"What I am trying to do is make waves," says Mr Jencks. And he is, although his method involves a vast earthworks where the landscape has been sculpted to represent the Theory of Folding (in which strings of amino acids fold to make 3D structures, affecting the performance of a protein).

The earthworks create the greatest sensation: a 50ft spiral mount with a double helix, both paths cut in such a way that when you head up, you have first to drop down, and vice versa.

Sculptured double helix

Below, curving pools reflect the autumn trees and a 35ft double wave, or dragon, of turfed earth. They may represent current scientific thinking; they certainly represent a lot of maintenance. It takes four days of teetering about on the causeways and tiny paths of the mounds to mow them.

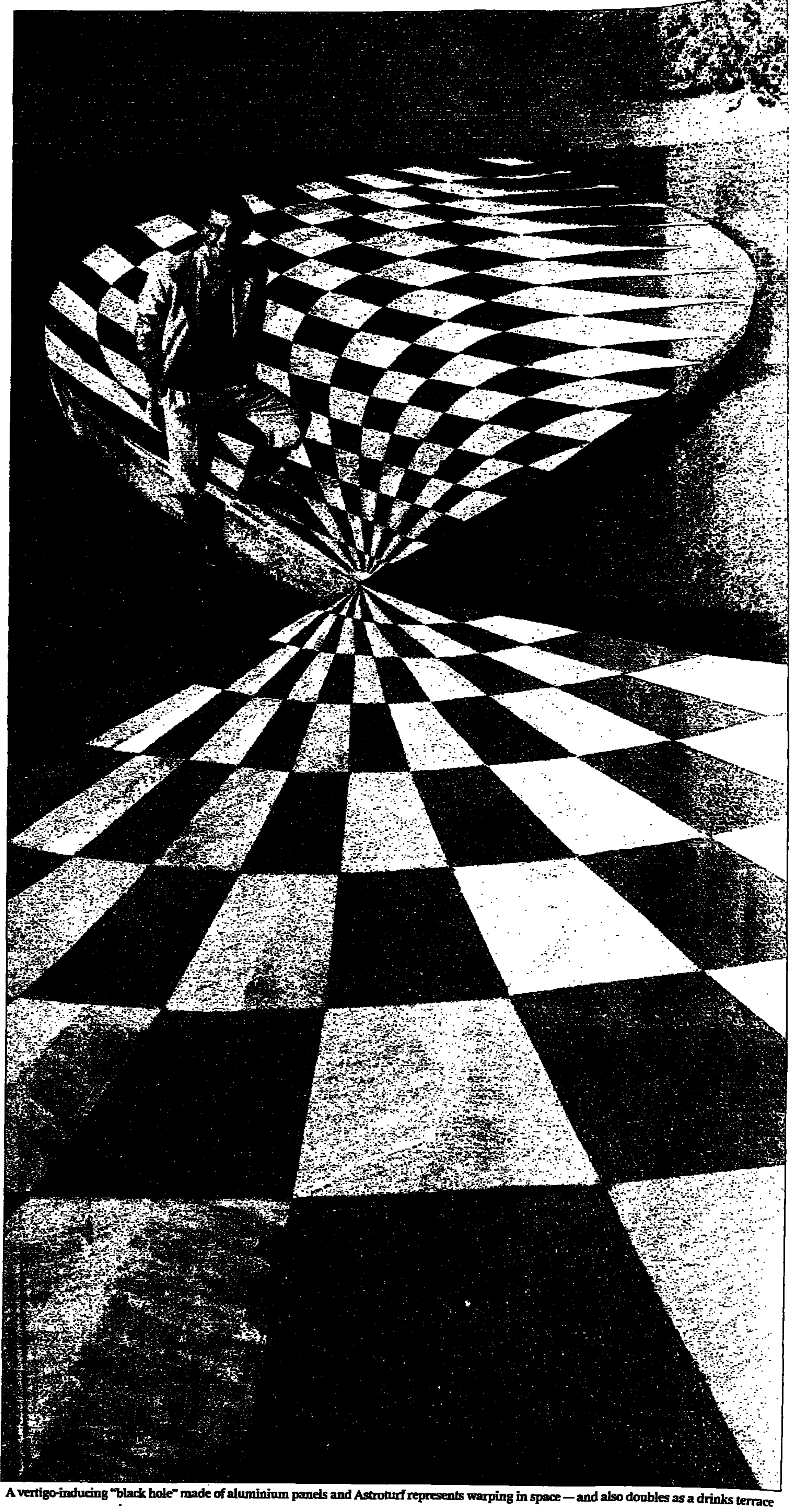
Alistair Clark, the head gardener, has devised a precarious system involving a Flymo on the end of lengths of rope, and a disabled safety catch.

"The garden began when Maggie decided to clear a marshy area. With the resulting earth, we made the dragon and the mount," says Mr Jencks, whose great-uncle, also called Charles, was a landscaper in North America.

"It cost a tenth of a Hockney painting. A big Hockney painting. Just think, you can hang a picture on your wall or cause the earth to move. I did make drawings, but in the end you give the drawings to the men in the bulldozers and, well, they come up with something like your drawing."

To the front of the house, which looks across a valley to the rolling Borders countryside, is a grey stone ha-ha with red sandstone articulation representing a dragon . . . and the jumping universe. And nearby is a newly made black hole. It is neither black nor a hole, but Mr Jencks is critical of the common names for scientific ideas and brings scientists and artists to the Keswick estate to discuss the latest theories of the world and decide how best to express them.

The black hole is shaped like a Christian fish symbol, with its "tail" slapped up against the sloping edge of the grass bank and its "body" flat across a grass terrace. Panels of scoured aluminium and Astroturf, all roughly diamond-shaped, but warping in size and shape so no two are identical, illustrate one of Mr Jencks's current obsessions: fractals, repeating shapes of different scale. "Natre is never self-same but self-similar," Mr Jencks says.



A vertigo-inducing "black hole" made of aluminium panels and Astroturf represents warping in space — and also doubles as a drinks terrace

Scouring on the surface of the aluminium panels represents the warping of space and provides grip for those walking down the black hole (the tail) on to the baby universe (the fish body), a drinks terrace with pleasant views across the earthworks below.

To the right is the Symmetry Break Terrace, an elongated lemon shape made of rays of gravel and turf. "There are four jumps in the creation of the universe. This is a story of the universe." Mr Jencks agonises about the way the story ends in his representation: with some bits of wood scrunching into each other at one end of the "lemon".

'The architecture of the garden moves on with every new theory that Jencks pounces on'

"Some people maintain the universe will end like this though — the universe going in on itself. Anyway, you are allowed to cheat — a little."

In the woods nearby is a brightly painted metal and wood folly built for the Royal Academy by Jim Stirling, altered by Mr Jencks, and a wayward tree that fell and temporarily deconstructed the Modernist architect's work. One of the few completely traditional components of this garden is a T-shaped greenhouse full of house plants, but even this causes a double take.

From the front of the greenhouse, a path leads through a tiny circle of yew hedge with a black hole at its centre. Truly a hole, and black in its depth.

Between this black hole and the greenhouse, a series of globe sculptures, placed like finials on top of six pillars, represent theories of creation. The globe theme continues on the other side of the greenhouse, but here in bronze to represent another era. "Bronze age, you see," says Mr Jencks.

Gates between the gardens are wrought iron undulations in the shape of soliton waves — small, hump-shaped waves that do not alter much as they travel. They are likely to transform the communications industry because they can be filled with information and sent through fibre optics without much loss of fidelity. The handles to these gates are polished, spiral-atterned fossils.

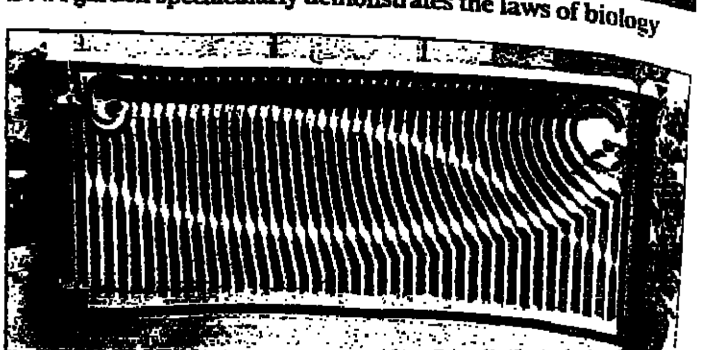
This attention to detail echoes through the garden. The DNA garden was originally planned as a tartan garden, as a tribute to Scotland. But the original patterns have been scored with curves of white concrete representing cells and DNA.

Tended by Alistair Clark, the DNA garden spectacularly demonstrates the laws of biology

Essentially, the garden is divided into six main squares representing six senses: intuition; touch — a waving hand in the midst of nettles and thistles; the hearing garden — with chimes and a radar-like disc; sight — a tiny grass mound with a grotto-like cavity into which you peer through an eyeglass; smell — which will have drains at the centre and a sweet-smelling planting around the edge; and taste — a beautiful aluminium sculpture of curves and spirals representing DNA set in the middle of an immaculate salad garden.

Mr Jencks professes to be "an idiot" about plants, which were his late wife's forte. Now Mr Clark and his team maintain planting perfection. But the architecture of the garden moves on with every new theory about the natural world that Mr Jencks pounces upon.

In the meantime, a footmaze of grass and aggregate is planned, along with a dry cascade. But I have given up trying to keep up with Mr Jencks's theories about what these garden features represent. His landscape has a rhythm and a beauty that can speak for itself.



Soliton waves are represented in the garden's wrought iron gates

MARIANNE MAJERUS

A red wooden bridge and the winding canal together form a pleasing contrast of delicate shapes

Why British trees are best

They may be more expensive but, says **Jane Owen**, home-grown Christmas trees are worth it

If you are among the 20 per cent of the British population who cling to tradition by erecting a *real tree at Christmas, it is time* to show nationalist zeal by buying British instead of paying a fortune for a dubious Danish tree from your nearest layby.

The foreign fir will probably have travelled in appalling conditions and will shower needles incontinently as soon as you move the tree into your living room.

If you buy British you get fresh, reliable trees which will lose only a few needles. Aim to pay £10-£15 for a top quality two-metre Norway spruce or Scots pine, or about £25 for the same sized Nordmann or Noble fir, the fine, slightly blue-tinged tree with minimal needle drop.

A few Christmas-tree growers operate something akin to Pick Your Own, although, having chosen your tree, they do the picking. Those of you who do not know of a Christmas-tree grower should contact the Christmas Tree Growers Association which has a list of growers nationwide.

Trees have to be nurtured according to how they are bought. Cut trees need *up to a pint of water a day*; in root ball form they have to be planted into plenty of moist compost; bare roots have to be soaked in a bucket of water for a few hours before being planted. Potted trees, which have not been prepared as carefully as root-balled specimens, need extra care and watering; container grown trees have to be watered; and blocked trees — those whose trunks have been shoved into a wood block stand for easy erection — have to be kept as cool as possible because they cannot be watered.

The range of trees grows by the year, and the claims get wilder, but some varieties are certainly better at keeping their needles than others. And most, so long as they are freshly cut, smell of pine. But remember, if you give a tree a shake and some needles fall off, don't buy it.

● *The Christmas Tree Growers Association is at 12 Lauriston Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 4TQ. Send an SAE for details of growers in your area.*

GARDEN PICTURE LIBRARY

Give the tree a good shake and if needles fall off, don't buy it. Most varieties need plenty of water

Norway spruce: bad needle drop

Nordmann fir: blue tinged needles

Korean silver fir: unusual cones

PICK YOUR OWN

- Blue spruce hangs on to its pretty blue-green needles well but they are the most expensive trees.
- Norway spruce is the traditional British Christmas tree. It has bad needle drop but is cheap.
- Nordmann or Caucasian fir is a handsome, regularly-shaped tree with a slight blue tinge.
- Serbian spruce has a silvery look because the needles are pale blue.
- Scots pine holds on to its twisted needles the best of all the trees featured here.
- Noble fir is a fine deep blue-green. It has a regular shape and excellent needle retention.
- Lodgepole pine sometimes comes with cones but it is a coarser, less regularly shaped tree.
- The blue-grey white fir or concolor is supposed to smell of oranges when the needles are crushed. Maybe the ones I sniffed had been cut too long but I could smell only pine.
- Grand fir, Fraser fir and Korean fir are all unusual and look like Norway spruce.
- For armchair Christmas shoppers, Marks & Spencer has mail-order Nordmann firs for £65.
- For the wretched souls who insist on artificial trees or for the overwhelmingly indolent, B&Q has a ready-decorated 6ft Treeluminate with twinkling lights — a snip at £55. Or, for the modern slouch, a 36in fibre-optic tree (£40) in a myriad of purple, orange and turquoise.

GARDEN ANSWERS

STEPHEN ANDERTON

replies to readers' letters

Q **On the north side of my house is a triangular bed between walls which meet at right angles. The bed measures about 2m on each side, and faces north. Can you suggest suitable shrubs to make an attractive design? I would like to plant a climbing *Hydrangea petiolaris* on the wall at the back.** — J. McLeod, Ashurst Wood, West Sussex.

A Perhaps you might consider letting the hydrangea have the whole bed to itself? It can spread across the ground and function as a flowering shrub, as well as a self-clinging wall or tree climber. Meanwhile, how about the purple climbing monkshood, *Aconitum volubile*, to grow through the hydrangea? There would be room for only one other large shrub. For real drama I would plant an *Aralia elata* — the spectacular foliage could be seen through as it got taller.

Q **We have been told that our 50ft blue spruce is dead or dying and have permission in this conservation area to fell it. It shed many needles in the spring, and made no new growth. One tree surgeon said it was only infested with aphids because of drought stress. So will it recover, given time and normal weather?** — L.A. Darke, London W4.

A On a weak tree, I would persevere and hope for better things. A healthy tree can withstand insect attack. But if your tree dropped many needles and did not open new buds this spring, then it is dying. Give it another year if you want to be sure, but I expect the arboricultural officer who gave permission to fell knew what he was doing.

Q **I have a jacaranda seedling in a pot. It stood outdoors during the summer and indoors on frosty nights and cold days. I know there can be low temperatures overnight in the tropics, if not actual frost. Do I need to keep bringing it in, and should it be fed?** — C.N. Turner, New Milton, Hants.

A It really needs a cool greenhouse for the winter, where it could shed those lovely double-feathery leaves. Keep it dryish through the winter, and pot on and feed gradually each spring. Jacaranda will produce its soft blue flowers in a large pot or tub, given good summers, and 2-3m of growth. It will withstand frost, but it is better without, especially while very young.

Q **Everyone thinks I'm crazy. I want to grow a white rose on a north wall, and set up a foil-covered reflector to put sunlight on the wall. Advice please.** — M. Hall, Letchworth, Herts.

A You are most unlikely to reflect enough heat to ripen the wood and produce a good white rose on a north wall. Far better to settle for something else. A white *Clematis montana* would do, or a white form of *Clematis alpina*.

● *Write to: Garden Answers, Weekend,* The Times, *1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility. Enclosures accompanying letters cannot be returned.*

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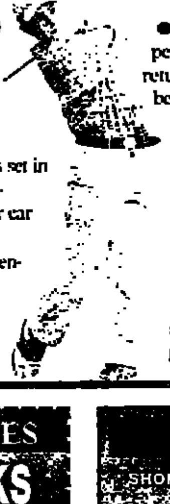

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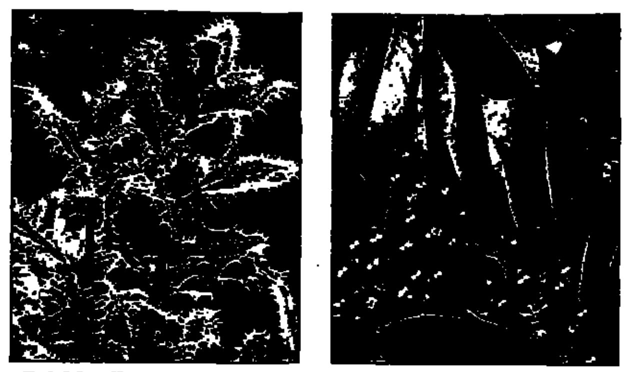
CHANGING TIMES

Prickly pairings of red and green

After unusually early frosts, holly should be bursting with colour. **Nigel Colborn** plants the best of the bunch



Prickly silver 'Ferox argentea'; the thornless 'Camellifolia'

GARDEN PICTURE LIBRARY

The berries of *Ilex aquifolium* 'Fructu luteo' turn a daffodil yellow

'Green Pillar' is the best green holly for a restricted space

'J.C. van Tol' gives a dependable crop of bright-red berries

This looks like being a vintage year for holly. Expect a larger than average crop of extra-bright berries after the unusually early autumn frosts which, far from causing damage, burnished the foliage. Branches harvested over the next few days should be in lustrous condition.

The common species, ***Ilex aquifolium***, is a native British plant and is the best of the berry-bearers. The trees can be male or female and they need to grow within bee-range of one another if they are to be successfully pollinated.

This is an excellent time of year both to buy and to plant holly, so here are some choices for a starter collection:

Ilex x aquifolium **'J.C. van Tol'** is a female variety with bottle-green foliage, well-glossed, but not too prickly. It has excellent vigour, and a dependable, hefty crop of bright red berries. It is the most likely to bear fruit, even with few male trees nearby.

Ilex x altaclarensis **'Golden King'** is a berry-bearing female, despite its masculine moniker. It is similar in size and characteristics to *aquifolium*, but carries gold markings on every leaf.

Ilex aquifolium **'Ferox argentea'** is colloquially known as 'Silver Hedgehog Holly' because its leaves are not merely armed along the margins, but carry prickles over the whole upper surface.

The leaves are stippled with whitish variegations, giving the tree a silvery effect.

If you want the antithesis — a totally thornless variety — try ***Ilex*** **'Camellifolia'**, the camellia-leaved holly.

Ilex aquifolium **'Handsworth New Silver'** is the stateliest of the silver variegated hollies. The leaves are larger than average — up to four inches long — with regularly spaced prickles and handsome creamy margins. Their effect is heightened by the young stems whose bark is a deep purple. It is a female with a moderate to heavy crop of blood-red berries.

Ilex x altaclarensis **'Belgica aurea'** is capable of growing into a large tree.

The large leaves are almost spineless, gin-bottle green, edged with broad margins of golden yellow. The female bears a moderate crop of berries whose glowing red makes a hot contrast with the gold and green of the foliage.

If grown naturally, the tree develops a pyramidal shape. Sometimes sold incorrectly as 'Silver Sentinel'.

Other yellow variegated forms include ***Ilex*** **'Madame Briot'**, whose young leaves are burnished with bronze, setting off the gold, and ***Ilex*** **'Lawsoniana'**, whose almost thornless leaves are streaked lime green and yellow.

Ilex aquifolium **'Green Pillar'** is the best of the green hollies for a restricted space. A slow-growing variety, whose all-green leaves are the traditional, prickly shape and whose berries are the standard blood-red with a high gloss.

The unique selling point of this variety is its growth habit. It forms a perfectly natural column, slightly wider at the base than the apex. If you prefer a wider, loose pyramid shape go for ***Ilex a.*** **'Pyramidalis'**. There is a super weeping variety too, called ***Ilex a.*** **'Pendula'**.

Ilex aquifolium **'Bacciflava'** (also known as 'Fructu luteo') is a yellow-berried form of the common holly. The fruits turn daffodil yellow, which widens the colour range of winter berries available.

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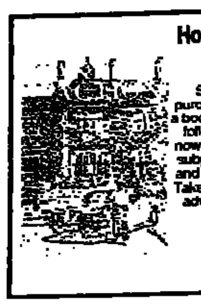

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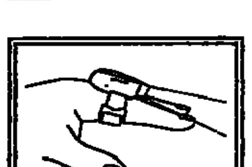

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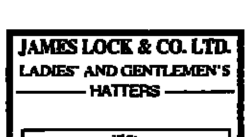

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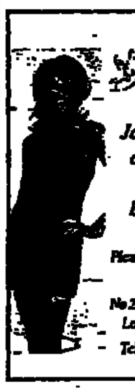

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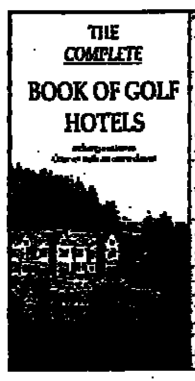

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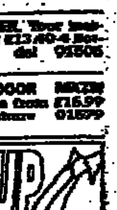

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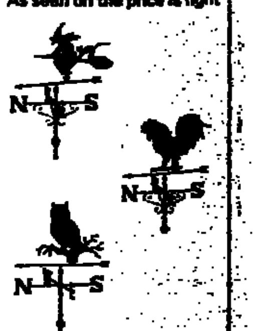

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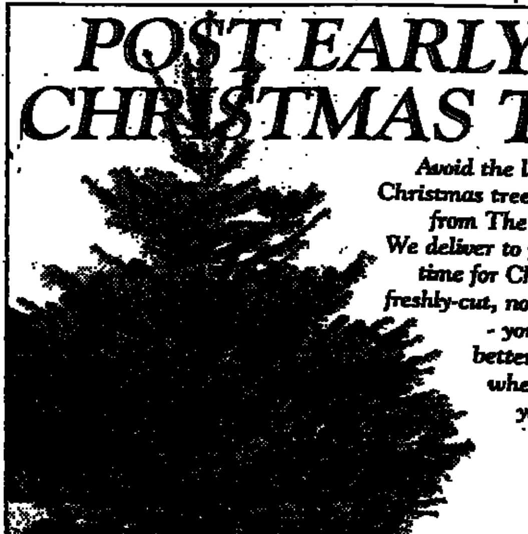

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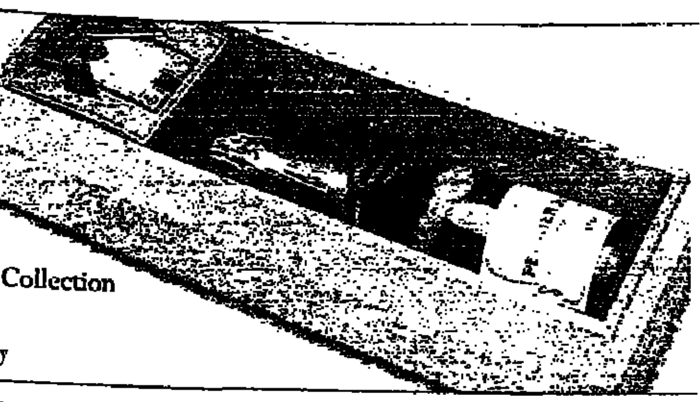

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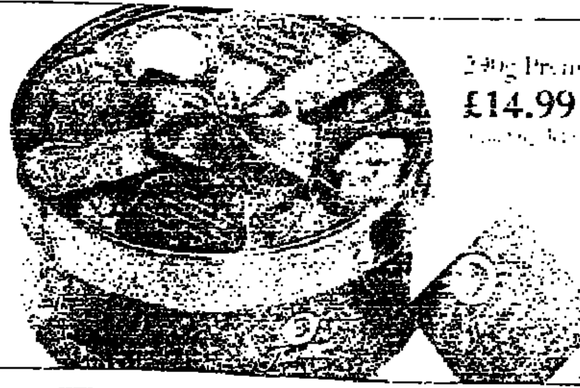

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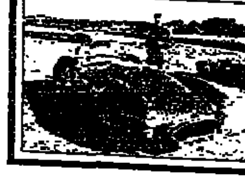

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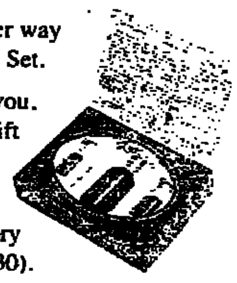

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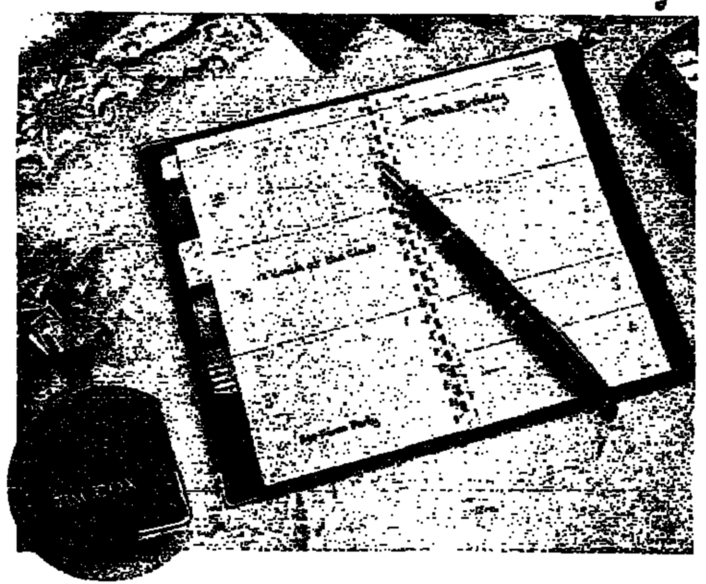

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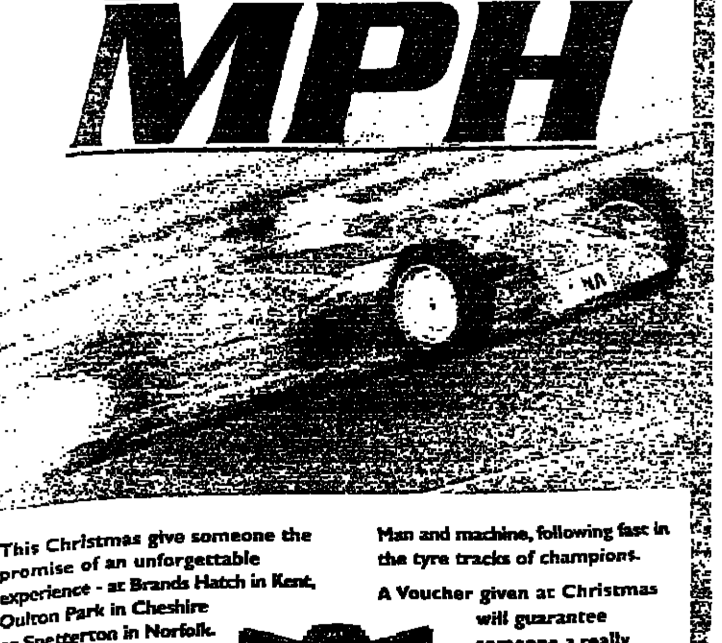

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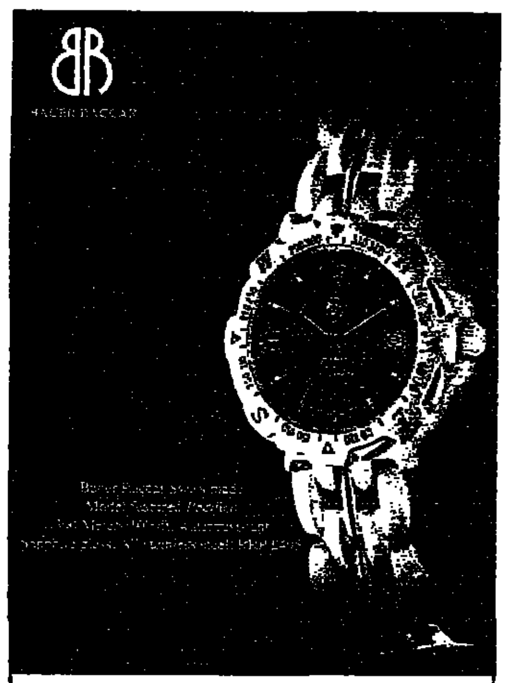

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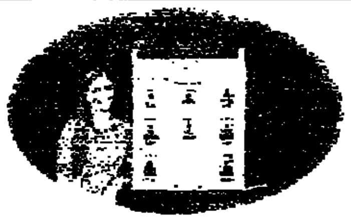

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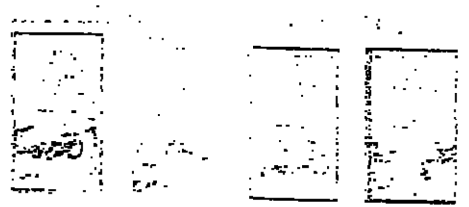

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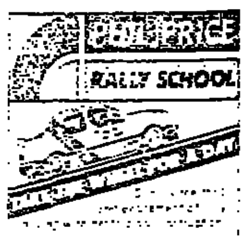

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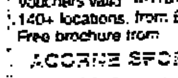

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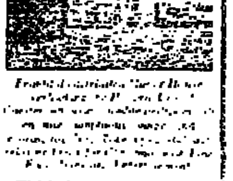

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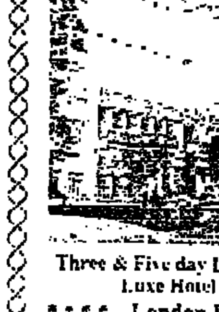

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Christmas Crackers or The Folklore and History of Christmas. Why do we kiss under the mistletoe? When was Christmas made illegal? At the Burton Manor College, South Wirral, Cheshire (0151-336 6586). Price £98.

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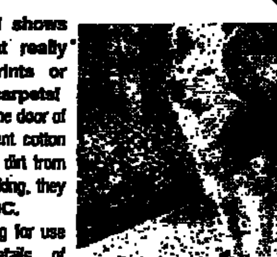

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Show's as slick as a parrot

Some winged creatures can not only walk and fly, but rollerskate too. **Jack Crossley** meets the contestants battling to become Britain's top birds

If you thought pigs would fly before parrots would rollerskate, think again. This weekend bird-owners from all over Britain are descending on Birmingham for the National Cage and Aviary Birds Exhibition, to show off birds that will not only tweet, flap and sing, but put wheels on their feet, drive toy cars, hoist flags and imitate telephones.

Like Crufts, this competition is not just about looks, although there will be about 8,550 competitors that will be judged on their feathers, wing span, size and condition. The feathered creatures that most people will come to see will be those that perform: parrots that can rollerskate and ride bicycles, a cockatoo that pulls a cart, and tens of others who will be trying to outwit each other in the talking competition. Entrants in this one include a cockatoo that can bark like a dog, a parrot that speaks English and Italian, and another that can wolf-whistle and imitate a microwave oven or gurgling water.

Although it is great fun having a performing bird, it is also a long, hard slog, according to experts. Not only are many of the best birds expensive to buy and keep — parrots can cost up to £1,000 — but training them can be a frustrating, even a heartbreaking, experience.

Jackie Goulder has been demonstrating performing parrots for 22 years (she learnt how to do it in Australia) and uses crested cockatoos and South American macaws. "Parrots," she explains, "have the intelligence and the characteristics of a three-year-old child. They're manipulative, acquisitive, inquisitive, noisy, demanding and destructive. But children grow out of it, and parrots never do.

"One of the most difficult things to get a parrot to do is to keep quiet. They are a huge responsibility, tremendously demanding. You have to alter your lifestyle to fit that of the parrot."

Miss Goulder advises would-be owners to think carefully about the kind of household and neighbours they have before shopping for a parrot. "You should be asking whether you and the neighbours could stand the noise, and whether your children would tease the parrot, or even get bitten," she says.

In America, training parrots to do tricks is becoming increasingly popular; most owners are spurred on by the demands of film and advertising companies which pay performing creatures well. In Britain the demand is not as high, and many bird purists disapprove of teaching creatures to do acts that are obviously unnatural.

Darren Beasley is the bird trainer at the Marquess of Bath's Longleat estate, and one of an exclusive club of a dozen or so people in Britain who demonstrate their skills — and parrot intelligence — at exhibitions, parks and zoos around the country.

He is insistent that nothing is performed that would demean the creatures. All his tricks are devised to demonstrate the birds' natural abilities — the roller skating and bicycle-riding tricks, for instance, do not involve them being strapped to their equipment.

"Parrots are inquisitive creatures, so will want to know, for example, what rollerskates are. Gradually, by rewarding them, you get them to raise a foot and stand on a skate. Eventually you produce the other skate, until it will stand on both of them.

"It works because parrots have got zygodacti feet — two toes that point forwards and two toes that point backwards, which means they can use their feet like hands. They also use their beak as a third hand, so when they are riding a bicycle they use both feet to grasp the pedals and their beak to hold on to the handlebars."

David Alderton, editor of *Pet Business World* magazine and author of several books on bird-keeping, approves of anything that encourages the bird to relate to its owner. "The bird will not perform if it doesn't want to. It won't do it if it is not happy," he says.

Veteran parrot trainer Reg Bloom who has shown parrots racing, flying through hoops, driving electric cars, placing square pegs in square holes, hoisting a flag to start the show, and rolling over to die for England says: "The birds love it. Mine will jump up and down saying: 'It's my turn.'"

But he warns: "It can take six months to get them to be happy just flying to your hand. Not every owner can do it. Not every bird can do it. Some are real numbskulls and will never do it."

● *The 54th National Cage & Aviary Birds Exhibition is at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, today and tomorrow (0121-780 4133).*

PET BUSINESS WORLD

Alpha, a 15-year-old red and green South American macaw owned by Jackie Goulder, has been performing since it was nine months old. In summer, it rollerskates and rides a scooter and tricycle daily at the Eden Farm Museum near Malton in North Yorkshire

A VET WRITES

Q **Do cats need exercise? I have adopted a six-year-old neutered female who has settled down well but spends all day sitting on a bench in my tiny garden, which is enclosed by a 6ft fence. I play with her by throwing a ping-pong ball which she chases — rather slowly. I'm concerned that her life is sedentary.**

A Cats need to "do their own thing", but I can't think of any species — apart from human — that takes exercise for its own sake. Your cat sounds content with her life, and the best plaything for a cat is another cat. Think about getting a kitten in the spring. A youngster about eight weeks old won't be seen as a threat by your cat-in-residence. There will be spits and spats, but once they have decided who is top cat (almost certainly the elder) things will settle down.

Q **Our year-old miniature poodle was playing normally when he suddenly screamed and couldn't touch the ground with one of his back legs. The vet told us he had dislocated his patella (kneecap) and the only way of preventing further trouble would be an operation. What are the risks?**

A There is every reason to operate. Things will not right themselves and your dog will have trouble for the rest of his life if you do nothing. There is a slight risk with any operation, but you have a young dog, so an anaesthetic should be uneventful. The kneecap is a pulley that runs in a groove at the lower end of the thigh bone (the femur). It slips out of place if the groove is too shallow, or if the femur and the tibia (the next bone down the leg) are not properly in line. There are two approaches to the operation. One aims to deepen the groove. The other is to alter the direction in which the knee cap slides. Your vet will decide which is appropriate.

JAMES ALLCOCK

● *Write to The Times Vet, Weekend,* The Times, *1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility.*

When is a church like a zoo? When dogs, cats, rats, rabbits, fleas and horses go to meet the vicar, says **Robin Young**

Blessed are the beasts and the birds

ADRIAN SHERRATT

Beauty the labrador is blessed by the Rev Ralph Godsall. His new flock included fleas and rats

I shared my pew at the back of the north aisle in St Stephen's Church, Rochester Row, with four rats. I suppose by comparison with people in the south aisle, I had little right to feel uncomfortable. They had a flea circus as neighbours.

The event was the third annual blessing of the animals by the Rev Ralph Godsall at his church near the horticultural halls in Vincent Square, southwest London, in aid of the Animal Health Trust. It had attracted a congregation of 600, about three-fifths of it human.

Animal blessing services are steadily growing in popularity, and received a huge boost when Dawn French triumphed in one in her TV role in *The Vicar of Dibley*.

Mr Godsall said the purpose of the exercise was to remind people, especially children, that animals too are part of God's creation.

"Animals feature in the creation in Genesis and at Christ's birth in Bethlehem," he said. "In modern society animals provide much of the companionship and comfort to many, so people like the idea that we should thank them by blessing them."

"I would not miss this service for the world," said one local resident, nursing a Yorkshire terrier of nippy tendencies. "It makes an outing for Silky, and a real treat for me to see so many people enjoying each other's company and each other's pets."

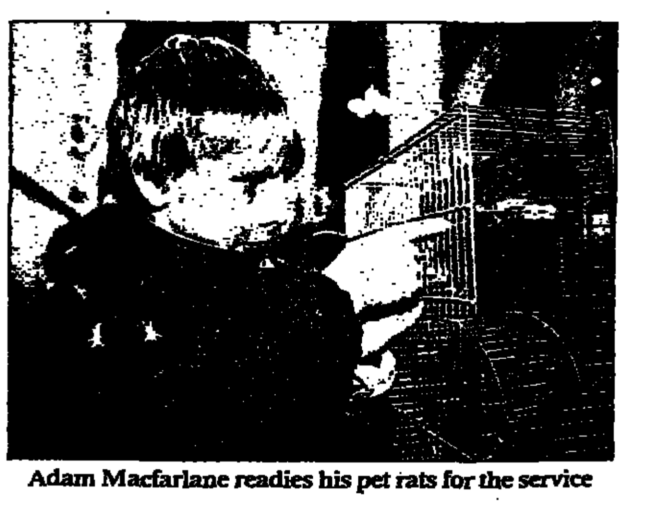
"Round here," said a lady with a handsome cat in a carrier-cage, "the animals can only go out if you are with them. It's terribly dangerous for them with the road traffic, the louts and all the frightening noises. I think Sparks is enjoying tonight, because it's one of the few occasions that she gets to see there are other cats in the world."

As church services go this one was, predictably, mildly chaotic. That was not the animals' fault. They were for the most part perfectly well-behaved, if inattentive, but they did distract the children who made up more than half of Mr Godsall's audience.

Pupils of the church's choir school, the Burdett-Coutts School, mingled with kids of the neighbourhood, admiring each others' gerbils, hamsters, cats, dogs and budgerigars.

The four rats, property of Adam Macfarlane, proved a star attraction. "I think rats are so lovely," said a pretty blonde girl, to Adam's evident satisfaction. He let her put one of the rodents on her shoulder, where it promptly tangled itself in her hair. Delighted shrieks and giggles followed, and then Adam effected a chivalrous rescue.

Olwyn the police horse takes a star turn in church


Adam Macfarlane readies his pet rats for the service

Pride of place at the back of the church was taken by two Metropolitan police horses, Keswick and Olwyn, who came in through the large west door just as the service was about to begin.

They were not encouraged to venture beyond a floor-boarded area, for fear their hooves might crack the nave's marbled flooring.

The order of service permitted mention of much of the animal kingdom. Mr Godsall pointed out that animals were a gift from God, and that they set us an example of patience, loyalty and friendship.

Camels, giraffes, monkeys, hyenas, whales, snails, quails, hogs, dogs and frogs, bats, rats and cats all worked their way into the opening song.

Butterflies, robins, fish, elephants, kangaroos, octopuses, worms, billy goats and bears featured in the second.

Then John McCririck, Channel 4's horse-racing commentator, read from *Wind in the Willows*, the bit where Mole and Rat are awe-inspired to worship. Mr McCririck, the vicar pointed out, had not only brought his partner with him. He had brought his dog as well.

The choir sang *The Bare Necessities* from the film of *The Jungle Book* and then actress Liz Fraser read John Betjeman's poem, *Diary of a Church Mouse*, rather risky in its mention of people who did not come to church at all, except for harvest festival. Many of this congregation, one suspected, seldom put in an appearance save for the blessing of the animals. The effectiveness of Ms Fraser's reading was only partly marred by the shrill catcalls from a cage of budgerigars at the back of the church.

'Apart from the fleas, the smallest animals were albino frogs and goldfish'

Another song extended the menagerie with the addition of shark, lark, tabby cat, desert rat, chimpanzee, common tern, crawling worm (the previous worm was only "wiggly"), the mongrel dog, snorting hog, badger, platypus, minnow and rhino. One hoped in vain for something leonine, or at least *Tiger, Tiger Burning Bright*.

Instead, a representative of the Animal Health Trust attempted a roll call of pets present. Quite a few children, it transpired, lacking live pets, had brought stuffed and soft toy animals along instead. Apart from the fleas, the smallest animals around appeared to be albino frogs and goldfish. No one, surprisingly, confessed to having brought mice. "We had mice last year," said the man in the pulpit, sounding disappointed. Although he didn't get responses to his request for reptiles, he did find some rabbits.

Then Mr Godsall called, largely in vain, for quiet while the choir respectfully sang *Bright Eyes* from *Watership Down* in memory of pets who had passed on. "Not one is lost without God knowing," intoned the reverend, just as an excitable border terrier made an energetic grab for one of Adam's rats.

God must have been watching, because the would-be rat-catcher missed by a whisker. Back in its cage the happy rat went for a brisk trundle in its revolving wheel to celebrate.

There was supposed to be a procession of the animals to the manger for blessing, but Mr Godsall said there were too many in the church for a procession to be possible. "We will have to come to you," he said, and he and the curate toured the church flicking the animals with holy water with the aid of two feathers donated — probably unwittingly — by a peacock.

"The rats are scared of water," cried Adam, moving to protect them with his anorak. But the creatures got sprayed anyway, and did not seem to mind at all.

Away in a Manger and, inevitably, *All Things Bright and Beautiful* brought the affair to a close. Keswick and Olwyn, who had barely stirred a hoof under the admiring pats of hundreds of children's hands, backed out of the church, Adam collected his cage of rats, the flea circus was packed away, and the street outside filled with dogs bursting to relieve themselves now that they were newly blessed.

● *For more details on animal blessings, contact the Animal Health Trust, 01638 751000*

ADOPT ME

ERIC is a two-year-old, silver-grey lurcher cross, who is gentle and loving. He can be shy initially with people although, once familiar, is very affectionate. He is house-trained and would suit a family with children. If you are interested in adopting Eric, please contact the National Canine Defence League Rescue Centre (01132 613194).

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Drink a pint of raw, unpasteurised milk a day and keep the dictatorial politicians — and their pointless proposals — at bay

Sour taste of Government stances

DOWN TO EARTH

PAUL HEINEY

The first Saturday of the new month is when this column is devoted to your letters. But you will forgive me if, this month, we instead look over the shoulder of Sir Julian Rose who is penning a letter to the Prime Minister.

Mr Blair would be well advised to read it carefully, for Sir Julian is something of an activist, and the last time a member of a government failed to take notice of him, the minister got it full in the face.

It is to do with the sale of raw, unpasteurised milk. The Government thinks this should be banned. Why it has come to this conclusion is unclear: in the four years since 1992, there were 218 cases of food poisoning (none fatal) which could be traced to raw milk. Even so, this might seem a substantial number, until you compare it with the number of cases linked to drinking pasteurised milk, which was 265. You do not have to work for Ladbroke's to decide which is the safer bet.

It is ten years since the previous government set out to ban the sale of raw, "green top" milk. Mr Rose took the opportunity at the Hyde Park Food and Farming celebration of that year to present publicly the then minister, John McGregor, with a glass of his raw, wholesome product. Like the devil shunning garlic, Mr McGregor did not allow a drop past his lips and retired embarrassed. Julian Rose, on the other hand, made his point and withdrew happy, like the cat who had got the (raw) cream.

If raw milk is presumed so dangerous, it is perhaps worth examining the presumably subversive farmers who produce it. Mr Rose's family have been selling raw milk from their organic herd for 50 years with never an incident of poisoning. He has just been awarded the Soil Association's prize for the Best Dairy Product for his unpasteurised cream. He is hardly a Borgia.

There are 500 other farmers like him: mostly small family concerns which struggle to cater for a specialist market against a tide of regulation and crushing competition from price-cutting supermarkets. All the raw milk producers are regularly inspected, and required to perform to higher standards than those where pasteurisation takes place. Despite this, the committed producers struggle on to meet a small demand.

The case for drinking raw milk, as explained to me by Mr Rose, is this: "It is whole, untreated and fresh. We believe that pasteurisation has negative effects on milk. There is certainly a loss of 10 per cent of vitamins B1, B6, and B12, and a 25 per cent loss of vitamin C. And there has been research which suggests there is an upset to the proteins which might be linked to the development of heart disease. Also, raw milk is 'alive' and has a natural resistance to invading microbes." Add to this the fact that because it is produced on a small scale and is usually on someone's doorstep within 12 hours of milking, unlike pasteurised milk which can be days old, a ban on its sale seems hardly justified.

But the real point is that nobody is *forced* to drink it. It is not being passed off as anything else. The law requires that the bottle must clearly state "Raw Unpasteurised Milk". If you think it tastes better, is better for you, and that because of the smaller scale on which it is produced you believe the cows have probably led better lives than in more intensive systems, then enjoy it. If you think it is filthy stuff, loaded with microbes, shun it. But please let us not allow governments to dictate what we can and cannot put in our mouths. Next, they will be telling us what can and cannot come out of them.

I cannot buy raw milk where I live, but would happily drink it *providing* I knew the farmers and could look them and their cows in the eye and decide if I trusted them. This is how most raw milk is sold: directly by honest roundsmen/farmers to loyal, contented customers. My bet would be that most of the incidents of poisoning from both raw and pasteurised milk would be from kitchen misuse, the cat licking it or a tit dipping a soiled beak into a bottle.

Those of us who hoped that the age of pointless government were over are saddened. My only suggestion to the raw milk producers is that they play the new Government at its own game. The law states that the bottles must carry the words, "May contain organisms harmful to your health". If this reminds you of the wording on a cigarette packet, you see which way my mind is working. Raw milk producers probably can't afford to sponsor Formula One, but they should put a few bob behind the local banger-races, or something else noisy, dangerous and polluting. There is, it seems, no better route to rehabilitation.

Postscipt: In the few days since this proposed ban was drawn to my attention, two people have told me they drank little else when children and it is the finest stuff. If you agree, or disagree, Mr Jeff Rooker is the Food Minister, and letters sent to him might be of more value than ones addressed here. This matter is urgent. Like milk, new governments can go off very quickly.

Readers' letters are welcome on countryside matters, of all kinds. Address them to: Paul Heiney, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. They are published on the first Saturday of the month.

Feeding time: to ease their workload, the Ellises have reduced their herd to 20 cattle

Picture postcard: Cheriton Farmhouse, with thatched roof, dates from the 14th century

ROBIN MAYES

The Ellises at home: John, left, Doris and Cyril in the kitchen of Cheriton Farm, near Honiton, Devon, which was bought by their father in 1911

Farming out the family home

The Ellises, facing retirement from their farm in Devon and an uncertain future, talk to **Rohan Daft**

The day this spring when the BMW being driven by the man from the Duchy of Cornwall found its way up the dark, deep-set tunnel of a lane that leads to Cheriton Farm, the Ellises thought they might have found a solution. The Prince of Wales, they were told, had taken a personal interest in them and maybe, just maybe, something could be done to help.

The Ellises — John, 79, his brother Cyril, 76, and their sister Doris, 81 — have lived at the farm near Honiton in Devon all their lives. They were born there, none has ever married, and, save for the four years Cyril spent in Tunisia, Italy and Austria during the last war, they have neither been separated nor travelled outside the farm's immediate vicinity.

Cyril did see London once at the end of the war, and John travelled to Dagenham in 1946 "to the Ford's motor works, to see the tractors being made", but that is about it. The family and Cheriton Farm — acquired by their father in 1911 — have been their entire lives.

The Prince's interest stemmed from an article about the Ellises which appeared in *Country Living* magazine. A local journalist had visited the family and asked them about their imminent retirement and the future of the farm — 100 acres of traditionally farmed pasture and spinney with a splendid array of wild flowers. There are no children to take it over, and the Ellises were keen that it did not fall — like so many other small local farms — into the hands of a large-scale farmer who would rip out the hedgerows and turn it into one vast field.

Country Living started a campaign to save the farm and, as well as the interest shown by Prince Charles, the Countryside Restoration Trust also paid a visit and expressed an interest in buying and preserving the farm. The Ellises felt quite hopeful.

The man from the Duchy told them that, should it buy the farm, they would be rehoused. That, says John, the more forthright of the brothers, was "very kind, very kind". But, continues Cyril, a broader man with a shock of grey, wind-blown hair and an easy smile, "I don't think these farms will be preserved". Doris, slightly built and the quietest of the three, concurs with a quiet "No". Talking to the Ellises can be rather like dealing with one person; sometimes they speak in unison as though they are being conducted and they never interupt each other.

It has been some time, however, since they have heard anything from either the Duchy or the Trust. The latter is said to be still considering the idea, but so far as the Ellises are concerned, they feel they are back at square one.

We are sitting in the Ellises' large kitchen. The heat is coming from an ancient Raeburn and there is a row of caps on the wall, and one of slippers on top of the large settle in the corner. There are stone tiles on the floor and Victorian prints on the walls. The farmhouse itself is a picture postcard of red brick and thatch and dates from the 14th century.

In an attempt to stave off the attentions of unwelcome buyers and, at the same time, to lessen their own workload, they have recently sold almost half of their land to neighbours. They now have 56 acres and 20 cattle but, if the right buyer comes along, the chances are that those neighbours, under the instruction of the Ellises, would sell the land back. It is a canny move.

"This is some of the best land in the country for grass land, arable land," says John. "But all the small farms have gone from around here."

"It belonged to a family called Flay years ago," continues Cyril. "They came here in the 1300s. They were royalists. But farming is difficult now."

"When we were boys," says John, "and when we started farming, other boys would come and help us. But there's no one around to help now."

Of course, children of their own might have helped but neither of the brothers regrets not having married. "No," they say, firmly, and in unison. "The amount of divorces, it's terrible," says Cyril. "I never had any intention of getting married," says John.

"One marriage around here lasted four months," adds Cyril. "Around here there are very few happy marriages," concludes John, a touch darkly.

Their accent is slightly harder and a little more hurried than the traditionally soft and soporific West Country burr. They are avid watchers of television and talk about volcanoes in Lanzarote, about how terrible it is when football managers get sacked for losing one or two games, and about the Spice Girls, whom Cyril thinks are "finished". For all their lack of direct contact with the outside world, nothing much passes them by. They are also charming and welcoming and, with regard to their time-warp farm, astonishingly practical and unsentimental.

'All the small farms have gone around here'

It would be ideal, says John, if someone bought the farm and preserved it as it is. But, he continues, it would be pretty much impossible for a new owner to enjoy a fairy-tale *Good Life*-style of existence. "The only person who could preserve it is someone with a lot of money. We've got a pension and that's how we have managed to carry on. Our weekly pensions are more than what a lot of small farms make in a week. Farming used to be a way of life, now it's a business."

For the time being, at least, they intend to soldier on running what remains of the farm. "We'll carry on for a bit," says John. "But you can't tell from day to day. Things happen quick."

When the inevitable happens and they can no longer manage, they surprisingly say that they can imagine living apart but, unsurprisingly, will not elaborate on the possibility. Though they really do not want to leave Cheriton Farm, they realise that unless some sort of solution is found, sooner or later they are going to have to.

"Around here, when we were boys," says John, "everybody died at home. Nowadays everybody gets put in an old people's home. Young people today won't be plagued with old people.

"Old people don't die in their cottages any more."

ON THE SPOT: BRENT TOR

Rural recommendations

The place: the church of St Michael, Brent Tor Devon.

The view: a stunning panorama with Dartmoor to the east, Cornwall to the west and Plymouth Sound to the south. On a clear day you can see the Exmoor hills.

Aficionados: hikers and visitors

Historical interest: this 13th-century church perches on a tor 1,100ft above sea level. Although the walls of the church are only 10ft high, they are more than 3ft thick and built of volcanic stone from the tor.

OS ref: 471/805 on sheet 201

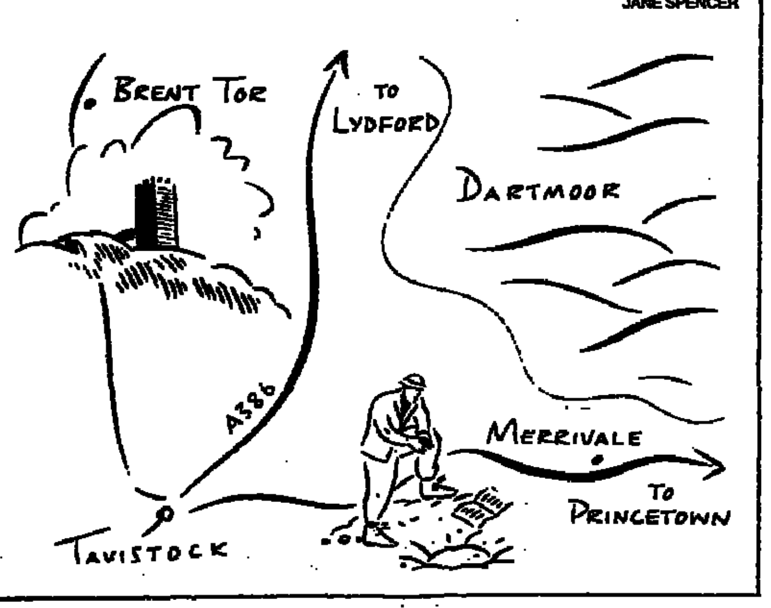
How to get there: from Tavistock take the road towards Lydford.

Time to visit: services are held from May to September.

Also nearby: market town of Tavistock, High Moorland Visitor Centre at Princetown, prehistoric settlements around Merrivale.

DEBORAH KING

JANE SPENCER



هكذا من الأجل

FEATHER REPORT

Take off for airport controls

WINTER BRINGS black-headed gulls inland. Some of the stretches of fine grassland they would love to feed on are airfields. However, the Royal Air Force has various means of scaring off gulls, and other species such as lapwings and golden plover, because a bird hitting a low-flying jet on a training mission can cause a lot of damage.

Special vehicles equipped with a loudspeaker tour RAF airfields playing recordings of the birds' alarm and distress calls. The birds take them for real, are duly alarmed and distressed, and fly away. Shell-crackers, which are like large Guy Fawkes bangers, are sometimes fired. There is also a law that landfill sites, where the rubbish attracts gulls, cannot be located within eight miles of an RAF station. These measures seem to be pretty effective.

The Israeli Air Force has a harder time. During the autumn migration, vast flocks of large birds, drawn from all over Europe and Asia, pass through the narrow channel of Israeli air space on their way to southern Africa.

I have just watched a spectacular video, *Flying With The Birds*, made by Benaya Bin-Nun for the Israeli Society for the Protection of Nature. It shows the hazards that jets have to face there, such as the 140,000 lesser spotted eagles that fly past in the course of an autumn, and the white storks rising in their thousands on thermals, or warm upcurrents of air, then gliding on south, slowly dropping, till they meet another thermal.

The film also shows how well Israel has coped with saving both the aircraft and the birds. Ornithologists, sometimes flying among the birds in motorised gliders, have recorded the dates when different species normally fly by, the height at which they fly, their speed, and any other data that can enable the air force to plan its training flights and avoid them.

On the ground they use revolving screens, showing gigantic eyes and falcon silhouettes, that have proved to be efficient scarers. There were some serious accidents injuring pilots in the past, but these methods have transformed the situation.

Meanwhile, back at the UK's civil airports, a steady vigil goes on. At London's Heathrow, one of the busiest airports in the world, there is a two-man special vehicle, actually called "Seagull", on patrol for 24 hours a day. The grass on the airport is kept eight inches high, which deters birds from settling, since they cannot look out for predators when they are deep in the grass. If any do attempt to land, the arrival of "Seagull" is usually enough to frighten them off, but the vehicle also has a tape-recording of distress calls, and blank shells, which are occasionally fired.

THE CIVIL Aviation Authority told me that there have been only four bird "strikes" this year, none of them serious. The bird species were not recorded, except for a flock of woodpigeons which hit a plane at Birmingham.

The Israeli Air Force takes the view that "the birds were here before us so we must learn to live with them". That philosophy seems to be working, fortunately, to the benefit of both bird and man.

DERWENT MAY

● *The video* Flying With the Birds *is available for US$10 from the Israeli Ornithological Centre, SPNI, Herzl 155, Tel Aviv 68101 (00 972 3 6826802).*

● Feather Reports, *a chronicle of a year's bird life by Derwent May, based on his Times articles and illustrated by Robin Jacques, is published by Robson Books at £12.95.*

● *What's about: Birders — Watch for siskins in birches and alders. Twitchers — bufflehead at Heveningham, Suffolk; desert wheatear at Hannafore Point, Cornwall; canvasback at Welney, Norfolk. Birdline 0891 700222. Calls cost 40p a minute cheap rate, 50p at other times.*

PETER BROWN

Gulls are a hazard to flights around airports

Screen debut for a high flyer

Gareth Huw Davies describes how one of the world's largest and rarest eagles was trained for TV

Stephen Ford had spent six weeks training Kali, a Philippine eagle, for a starring role in a BBC wildlife film and the moment had come to release her for her first free flight into the tropical rainforest. But there was one nagging doubt in his mind. Would she ever come back?

All his long experience in training raptors suggested that she would, drawn to the certain supply of food she associated with her handler. But there was the small risk she might prefer the forest's ready supply of small monkeys, her natural food in the wild, and might never return.

The reason for Mr Ford's nerves was that Kali is one of the world's rarest birds of prey — there are just 19 in captivity and perhaps a few hundred left in the wild. As the property of the Philippines Government, she was an important state asset. Her loss would have threatened the jobs of the Government employees who had helped him, embarrassed the BBC and compromised Mr Ford's reputation as a bird trainer of international standing.

So he decided to make the inaugural flight — until then Kali had been tethered by a 50-yard line — in secret. "The locals were so terrified I would lose Kali that I took the precaution of hiding a small radio transmitter under her tail so we could have found her again in the forest. In the event, it wasn't needed. She came back to me."

Kali flying free through the forest provides the opening sequence of *Wildlife Special: Eagle*, narrated by David Attenborough (Wednesday, December 17). BBC cameraman Michael Richards knows he would never have been able to obtain such shots with a genuinely wild bird. "There is always foliage six feet in front of you. All you can do is sit at the side of a valley and hope one comes flying by."

Mr Ford has been training birds of prey since he was 12. He grew up in Devon, and developed his passion for raptors when his parents took him to a pageant. He left school for the unlikely dual calling of head falconer at a local raptor centre and professional stunt man.

He bought his first bird of prey, a hawk eagle, out of the £10 fee he earned for falling off horses at medieval pageants. With his wife Emma he set up the British School of Falconry. In 1992 the Fords moved their school into the Gleneagles Hotel in Scotland, where they run courses and hunting trips for guests.

Mr Ford's commission to train a Philippine eagle was one of his biggest challenges yet. "It had never been done before to this level. There was nobody's experience to go on." When he arrived at the Centre for Philippine Raptors at Los Banios, south of Manila, even he was astonished by the bird's size. It stands 3ft tall, weighs 6.5kg and at 7ft has the largest wings of any eagle.

For the first week he did nothing but observe the two possible candidates in their cages. Eventually he rejected one as too aggressive and territorial and chose Kali, trapping her in a large butterfly net.

His first target was to induce her to stand on his fist. ("These birds would rather hang upside down like demented chickens and bite large chunks out of you.") He had a sleeve made of quarter-inch reinforced leather from his wrist to his shoulder. But high in the mountains in 94 per cent humidity he found he could work for only 20 minutes at a time. So it was two weeks before he made his first contact with the bird and began to bring her under control. When she finally landed on his fist, her talons felt like nails. Although they did not pierce the leather, they left his hand severely bruised.

A bird of prey is controlled through its stomach. At six and a half kilos Kali was contentedly, and lazily, overweight. Ford had to trim two kilos off her before she was in hunting shape, and hungry enough to need to take to the air. When she reached her optimum weight he let her fly on a long lead over a football field, where she showed undue interest in the stray dogs.

As soon as Kali could fly free, and unencumbered with anything to remind viewers she was not totally wild, filming began. Over six days Mr Richards obtained his entire checklist of sequences, including unique shots of this species on the wing in the forest, and terrifying approaches to the camera as if coming in for the kill.

Kali is now back in her cage. She is calmer and will be easier to handle in a captive breeding programme designed to restore this severely depleted bird to the wild. At seven years old she may have 50 years of life ahead of her, with considerable breeding potential. The tragedy is that so much of the forest habitat in which her reintroduced offspring would have been able to hunt has been destroyed.

EBC

Star bird: the magnificent Kali, one of only 19 Philippine eagles in captivity, with her trainer Stephen Ford

FILMING TIPS

Take care snapping apes

HOW DO you capture wildlife on film? BBC cameraman Michael Richards has the answers.

- When photographing eagles, familiarise the bird to the idea of the camera by placing a bottle with its bottom facing the nest during your absence.
- When filming gorillas, don't look them in the eye — they see it as a threat.
- Never film nesting birds in bad weather. If your presence keeps a mother bird from the nest, the nestling may die of wet or cold.
- Loud dressing frightens wildlife. Wear warm and silent clothing — preferably wool and cotton, and nothing rustly or plastic.
- Develop the ability to remain silent and motionless for hours — take a folding seat. Wildlife subjects will come much closer to you.
- Use a hide. Introduce it over a period of days; build it in stages or walk it in slowly towards the subject. Watch from afar to make sure it is accepted.
- Bring a second person to the hide and have him or her walk away conspicuously. Most birds (except crows) can't count, and will assume the hide is empty.
- Most animals, including birds, can smell, so don't wear strong perfume or after-shave. Even the smell of a cigar smoked the night before can disturb a bird.
- Never annoy or aggravate your subject; some, such as an elephant or black rhino, could kill you.
- Don't disturb your subject for dramatic effect, such as causing a flock of birds to fly.
- Learn to read the sounds of nature; they give clues to what's happening. For example, small birds may be agitated because a sparrowhawk is about.

Deborah King offers hints to warm hedgehogs' hearts and help them survive hibernation

Preparing for the long sleep

Hedgehogs might need your help as the cold weather closes in. During the next four months their body temperatures will drop below freezing and their hearts manage just five beats a minute as they hibernate. If they are healthy and well fed, their chances of surviving the winter are good, but with the hard ground caused by a dry summer, many could find the going tough.

Anne Jenkins of the British Hedgehog Preservation Society says: "It was incredibly hot last Easter, reaching almost 80 degrees. This encouraged them to emerge from hibernation and breed — but a few weeks later there were widespread frosts and many of the litters died." Although exact figures are difficult to estimate, Ms Jenkins reckons there are nearly two million hedgehogs in Britain. "And I have little doubt their numbers have dropped dramatically," she says.

The hedgehog's normal diet consists of slugs and worms. But this summer's parched earth has forced them to make do with beetles and scraps of food. To sustain them during hibernation the animals should weigh at least 500 grammes, but Ms Jenkins has already seen a large number of starving hedgehogs, and autopies performed on those that did not survive last year's hibernation have revealed a lack of vital fat reserves.

The simplest way to help them is to feed them and help them keep warm.

Conservationist Dr David Bellamy helps the hedgehogs in his garden in County Durham. "I always check the bonfires before lighting them to ensure no hedgehogs are present," he says. "And I leave deep piles of dead leaves in sheltered corners for them to build a nest." Hedgehogs can, perhaps amazingly given their lack of speed, travel two miles each day in search of food. They often build more than one nest, so the raw materials for the nest are as important as their food supply.

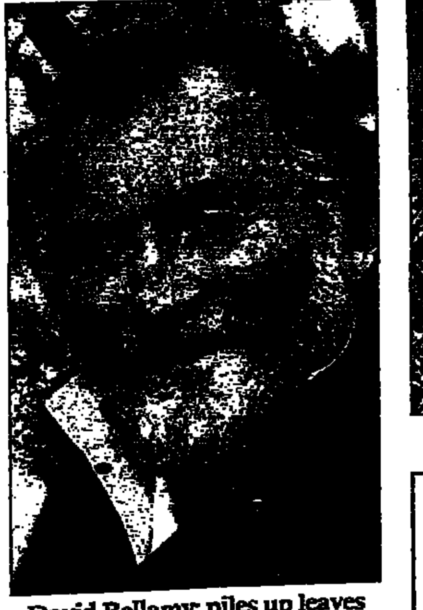
Hedgehogs love overgrown areas, and it helps to keep a well-watered patch of grass in the garden to encourage worms and provide a natural food supply. Leaving a tray, similar to the transparent ones from supermarkets, outside the house also helps protect the food; cutting a small hole in the side and placing it over the food weighed down with a brick is an effective way of stopping opportunistic cats from moving in.

But what do you feed them? Ms Jenkins suggests one treat: "They love to crunch on something, so an old chicken carcass is ideal." She also recommends placing a length of plastic pipe with a diameter of five inches in a rockery to help keep the food safe from other animals. It can be easily disguised under soil and plants, where hedgehogs can find it.

Hedgehogs will eat almost anything — including pasta and tinned cat food. Mavis Righini, who runs a hedgehog rescue centre in Bromley, Kent, says many of her 32 animals are particularly fond of chicken-flavoured cat food.

Ms Jenkins, however, has a recipe to delight even the most discerning hedgehog: a mixture of dried fruit, bran flakes, dried insects (available from most pet shops) and chopped nuts. The benefits are two-fold, for the remains can be finished off by the birds the next morning.

● *British Hedgehog Preservation Society (01584 890287).*


David Bellamy: piles up leaves

JOHN GILES

Build up: hedgehogs need to increase their fat stores for hibernation

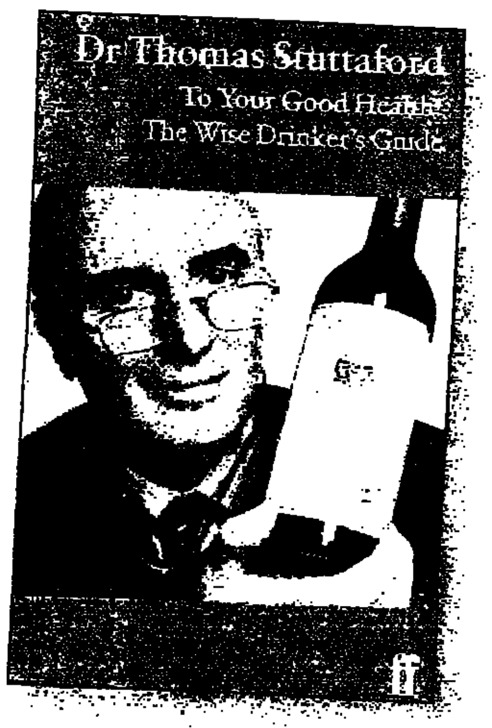
HEDGEHOG FOOD

MEASURE half a cup of the following and bind with a tablespoon of peanut oil:

- dried fruit (such as raisins, sultanas, currants)
- dried insects
- chopped peanuts
- a mixture of bran flakes, muesli and digestive biscuits.

FACT FILE

- Hedgehogs have existed for 15 million years.
- The average litter size is six.
- British variety is known as *Erinaceus europaeus*.
- There are more than a dozen other varieties in the world.
- Mongolian hedgehogs have long ears.
- A minimum weight of 500g is necessary to survive the winter.
- Average lifespan is three to four years.
- There are about 500 rescue centres in Britain.



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Dr Thomas Stuttaford is well known as *The Times* medical columnist, with more than a million readers turning to him daily for advice on the latest medical matters. In this book he sets out a balanced view on drinking and health. The key message is that, taken in moderation, alcohol is good for you. Taken to excess it can be disastrous.

Dr Stuttaford proceeds through history to the latest research and draws on many case studies. What emerges is fascinating. Alcohol, he argues, helps to prevent strokes, lessens the likelihood of late-onset diabetes, acts as an anti-oxidant and improves the sperm count. It even has a beneficial effect on the intellect, especially amongst the elderly.

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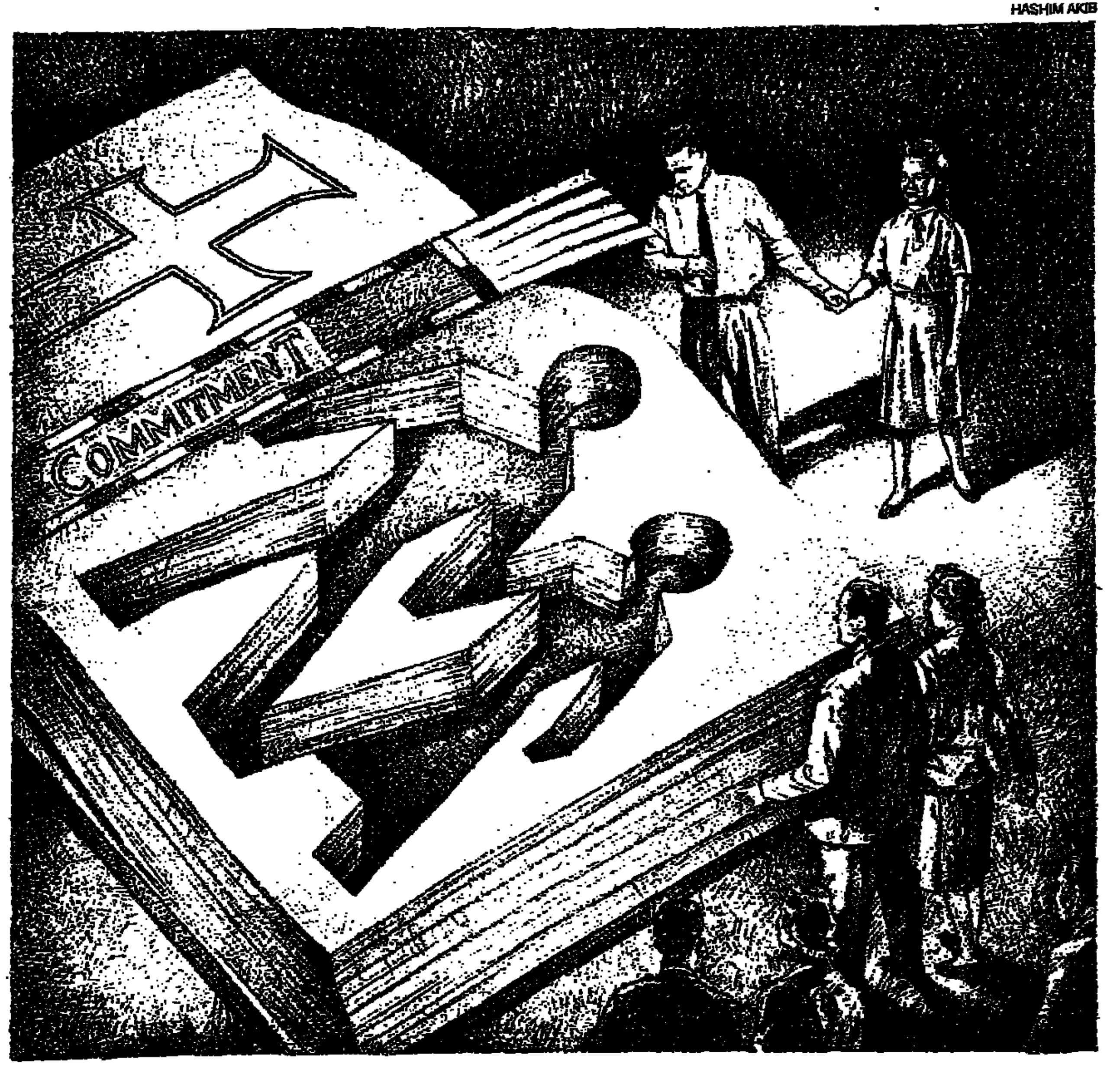
Why I want to marry you

Johnny Acton, a Catholic, and his Anglican fiancée attend a novel pre-nuptial course

HASHIM AKIB



In February, I, a Roman Catholic of sorts, am getting married to an Anglican of sorts. Her father candidly admits that some of her Ulster forebears will be turning in their graves, but my future in-laws are welcoming me with open arms, even if the price is forking out for champagne and nibbles for a family that comes in batches of ten, and submitting to a thoroughly Papist do. But how does the Catholic Church view "mixed" marriages? And what can it offer in the way of preparation for an institution that can seem depressingly jaded to couples who are not necessarily innocence personified?

As everybody knows, the Catholic Church takes a strong line on marriage and emphasises its indissolubility. But in recent years it has had to face up to the fact that almost the same proportion of marriages conducted under its auspices are failing, as in society as a whole.

One of the ways it increasingly seeks to tackle this problem is through insisting that couples intending to marry in an RC church attend one of its pre-nuptial preparation courses. These are replacing the old system, where couples would have a few preparatory sessions with the priest booked to tie their knot.

The disadvantages of the earlier approach, chiefly the fact that a celibate clergyman was *a priori* not going to be a great practitioner of what he preached, are removed by the courses being conducted by fully trained (and married) lay couples. The course we were signed up to, behind Westminster Cathedral and therefore near the epicentre of English Catholicism, promised to be a good gauge of the new system.

Our first impression of the gathering of about 30 fiancé(e)s was that the whole affair was rather "couply". Everywhere people were cooing and holding hands. The net effect was a friendly and curiously chaste atmosphere, enhanced by Rosie and Martyn, who were conducting proceedings. It was a great comfort to the "mixed" couples (who account for two-thirds of those attending the Westminster courses) to find that she was a committed Catholic and he was equally committed to the C of E.

Presiding over the "weekend" (Friday evening and Saturday afternoon) was Father Tim Dean. He was on hand to give spiritual and bureaucratic advice (marriage involves a fair amount of paperwork), and to close the sessions with readings from the New Testament — his interpretation of Jesus changing water into wine at the marriage at Cana as proof of the Church's duty to provide practical help at a wedding was particularly well received. Although there was relatively little mention of God, everyone seemed to be approaching their marriages in a suitably serious manner. When I asked the course leaders what they believed the weekend was for, they gave different but complementary emphases.

For Rosie and Martyn it was "a chance to reflect about the serious step you are taking" and to tackle the three Cs: "communication, conflict resolution and commitment". Father Tim, as befits his job, summed it up thus: "What we are trying to do is get people to answer the question: Why are we getting married in church rather than somewhere else?"

The format for the weekend turned out to be introductions to an exercise, followed by the couples dispersing to carry it out, followed by whole group discussions. The exercises took two main forms. The first centred around a magic pen, which conferred on the partner holding it the exclusive right to talk until it was handed over.

This device ensured both partners had an extended crack at talking and listening, while an important topic was covered that might otherwise be avoided.

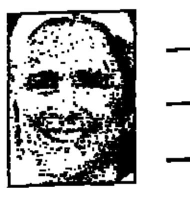
The second exercise involved both partners filling in a questionnaire in which they ticked the column that applied to them, and tried to guess how their other half would respond to the same question. This was an enjoyable way of checking the understanding within the partnership and revealing how each viewed the other.

On the whole, we came out like Darby and Joan, although there were anxious moments when radically different reactions emerged to statements like "I think the housework and shopping should be joint tasks", or when notes were compared on the subject of sexuality. I had seriously misjudged my partner's attitude towards my underwear.

We emerged exhausted by the emotional charge of it all, but full of gratitude for having been made to bare our souls on important matters. There was a sense that most of the important topics had been covered (children, money, sex, division of labour), and we had certainly got more of an idea of what would be necessary to make our union work.

The Catholic Church deserves great credit for organising it, even if I am now committed to doing half the washing-up until death us do part.

Always a new door to open



Ruth Gledhill hears the Moderator of the Church of Scotland

THE FIRST challenge facing any pilgrim in search of the Crown Court Church of Scotland is to find it. The church stands in the heart of London's theatreland, but even St Ninian, travelling to Whithorn to build Scotland's first stone church in 397, would surely have been daunted by this particular one-way system.

The Church of Scotland is spiritually independent, being a national church which is both endowed and free, and Crown Court, as it is known, is the longest established Presbyterian church south of the border.

Every year, the general assembly of the Church of Scotland elects a new Moderator, the highest honour that can be bestowed on a minister, and this year it was the turn of the Right Rev Sandy McDonald. In rank and precedence, the Moderator comes next to the Lord Chancellor, and before the Prime Minister.

During St Andrew's-tide, it is the tradition for the Moderator to visit London for an official tour, meeting the Prime Minister, the Lord Mayor of London, the Lord Chancellor and visiting the Houses of Parliament, as well as going to Borderline, the church's London centre for homeless Scots. We were at Crown Court, which takes its name both from its site and from the Union of Crowns in 1603, to hear him preach.

The church, which has a congregation of 300-plus, filled to capacity during the organ voluntary, worshippers including tiny children and the elderly. After some hymns, two lessons and an anthem, the Moderator addressed us. He acknowledged the important mission of this church in London: "The church offers an open door, not just to Scots but to all kinds of people who find themselves coming to the heart of London. To see the Fortune Theatre on one side and Drury Lane can the other reminds me that the church needs to be involved with people at every level of experience and in every circumstance in which they find themselves."

He spoke on the symbolism of doors, which can be barriers or openings to new life. "Despair may reach us if we get to the point where we feel from the depths of our being that there are no new doors to open in life," he said. "But I feel there is not a day that passes but a new door opens."

He spoke also of the virtue of being able to be flexible about personal opinion: "If you can't change your mind, you are like stagnant water and remember, stagnant water breeds all kinds of dangerous diseases and troubles."

Britain is commemorating the anniversary of St Columba, who died in 597 and who evangelised Scotland from Iona, along with St Augustine, who landed on the shores of Kent in the same year. The church's font is said to be carved from the last marble ever quarried on Iona.

● *The Church of Scotland, Crown Court, London WC2B 5EZ (0171-836 5643).*

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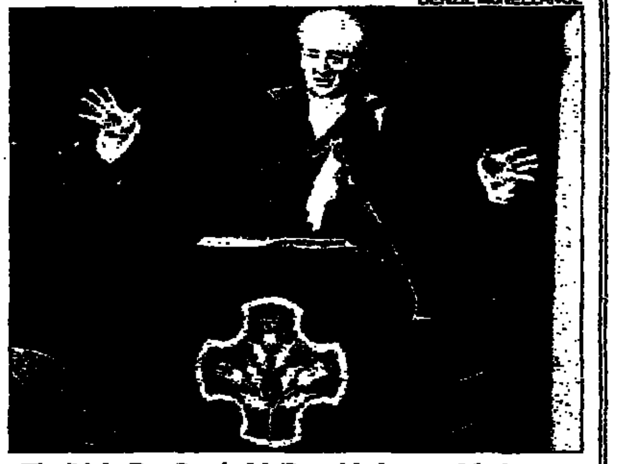

The Right Rev Sandy McDonald, the new Moderator

Banish the blues and give thanks for what you have

Credo

JONATHAN SACHS

Oliver James's recent book *Britain on the Couch* tells a depressing story. Quite simply, we have become more depressed. Twenty-five-year-olds today are between three and ten times more likely than their parents to have suffered some form of depressive illness. We have become, in his phrase, a "low serotonin society", serotonin being the chemical register in the brain of general states of well-being.

Depressive illness requires serious medical attention. James's book, though, raises a larger question. Can there be, he asks, something within our culture that has given rise to this sudden increase? Admittedly, it will not explain individual cases, only trends. But the question is real and has a long history. Just as there can be a physically unhealthy society, so there can be a psychologically unhealthy one.

James argues that part of the blame lies with the chaos of intimate relationships and the breakdown of the stable, two-parent family. No less important, though, are the kinds of emotions favoured by a commercial, competitive society. "Advanced capitalism," he says bluntly, "makes money out of misery and dissatisfaction."

Paraded daily before us on our television screens and newspapers are images of perfection, people who are more beautiful or thin or clever or attractive than we will ever be. Ours is a culture of artificially created longings. We are invited to resolve the tension by buying this, or wearing that, or going there. Unhappiness is good for business. It just happens to be bad for people.

At this stage, the religious believer wants to protest that it need not be like this at all. It is not a matter of opposing capitalism and all its works.

It has made possible much of what makes life more dignified for more people than ever before. Economic growth and technical progress have allowed us to treat disease, conquer absolute poverty, and extend the possibilities of travel and communication.

The average supermarket shopper today has a range of choice that, a century ago, would have been beyond the reach of kings. There is nothing wrong in celebrating the achievements of advanced societies.

But there is one spiritual discipline religion once gave us and that we still need. It is the simple act of saying "thank you" to God. There are prayers in which we ask God for the things we do not have. But there are others in which we simply thank God for the things we have: family, friends, life itself with its counterpoint of pleasure and pain, the sheer exaltation of knowing that we are here. Gratitude, the acknowledgement that what we have is a gift, is one of the most profound religious emotions. It is to the mind what serotonin is to the brain.

To thank God is to know that I do not have less because my neighbour has more. I am not less worthwhile because someone else is more successful. Through prayer, I know that I am valued for what I am. I learn to cherish what I have, rather than be diminished by what I have not. A third-century rabbi, Ben Zoma, put it simply. "Who is rich?" he asked. Not one who has much, but "one who rejoices in what he has".

There is no single route to happiness, just as there is no single cure for depression. But the daily discipline of thanking God for what we are and what we enjoy is the most ancient form of what is today called "cognitive therapy". Making a blessing over life is the best way of turning life into a blessing.

● *Jonathan Sachs is the chief rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations*

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CHANGING TIMES

Church services for tomorrow

The second Sunday of Advent

ARMAGH CATHEDRAL: 10 HC; 11 Ch E, Darke in F, Rev W J Dawson; 3.15 Ch E.

BELFAST CATHEDRAL: 10 HC; 11 S Euch; 3.30 Ch E, Noble in B minor.

BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL: 9 MP; 9.15 HC; 11 Ch Euch, 4 Ch E, Watson in E; 5.30 Asian Christians' Service.

BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.15 Ch M; 10.30 Euch, Missa Brevis (Palestrina); 4 Ch E, Canon Hall.

BRECON CATHEDRAL: 8, 11 Euch, The Brecon Mass (Philip Moore); 3.30 E.

BRISTOL CATHEDRAL: 7.40 M; 8 HC; 10 Ch Euch, Canon J Simpson; 3.30 Ch E, Second Service (Leighton).

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.30 M; 11 S Euch, Mass for 5 voices (Byrd); 3.15 E; 6.30 Sermon & Compline.

CARLISLE CATHEDRAL: 7.45 M; 8 HC; 10.30 S Euch; 3 E, Dyson in F.

CHELMSFORD CATHEDRAL: 7.30 MP; 8 HC; 9.30 Euch & Parade; 11.15 S Euch; 3 Willow Tree Carol Service; 6 Ch E.

CHESTER CATHEDRAL: 10 Family Euch; 11.30 M; Jubilate in E flat minor (Howells); 3.30 E; 6.30 ES, The Dean.

CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M, Harris in A; 11 S Euch; 3.30 E.

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, Dublin: 11 S Euch, Mass in G (Schubert); 3.30 Ch E.

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, Oxford: 8 HC; 10 M & Sermon, Canon O'Donovan; 11.15 S Euch; 6 E.

CORK CATHEDRAL: 8 Euch; 11.15 S Euch, Collegium Regale (Howells), Very Rev R Jeffrey; 7 Ch E.

COVENTRY CATHEDRAL: 7.40 MP; 8 C; 10.30 Euch, Stanford in C & F; 5 Ch E.

DERBY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.45 S Euch, French Mass (Shepherd); 3 The Christingle Service; 6 Ch E.

DURHAM CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M, Stanford in B flat; 11.15 HC, Canon S Pedley; 3.30 E, Second Service (Gibbons).

ELY CATHEDRAL: 8.15 HC; 10.30 S Euch, Missa Solemnis (Mozart); 3.45 E.

EXETER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 S Euch, Canon D Ison; 11.15 M; 3 E, Collegium Regale (Wood); 6.30 ES.

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.15 Euch; 12.15 HC; 3 E, Wood in F.

GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 S Euch; 11.30 M; 4 British Airways Carol Service; 6.30 E, Sumsion in G.

HEREFORD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 Euch; 11.30 M, Jackson in G; 3.30 E.

LEICESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M; 10.30 Euch; 4 Ch E, Murrill in E.

LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.30 S Euch; 3.30 E, Humfrey in E minor.

LINCOLN CATHEDRAL: 7.45 Litany; 8 HC; 9.30 S Euch; 11.15 M; 12.30 HC; 3.45 E, Stanford in C; 5.30 Carols in the Nave.

LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL: 8 MP & HC; 10.30 Euch; 3 Ch E, 4 HC.

LLANDAFF CATHEDRAL: 8, 9 HC; 11 S Euch, Jackson in G; 12.15 HC; 3.30, 6 E.

MANCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8.45 M; 9 Euch; 10.30 S Euch; 2 St John Ambulance Carol Service; 6.30 E; 8 Lighting of the tree at St Anne's Hospice.

NEWCASTLE CATHEDRAL: 7.30 M; 8 HC; 9.30 S Euch, Canon I Bennett; 6 Ch E.

NEWPORT CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.30 Family Euch; 6.30 Ch E, Dyson in F.

NORWICH CATHEDRAL: 7.30 MP; 8, 9.15 HC; 10.30 S Euch; 3.30 E, Gloucester Service (Howells); 7 School Carol Service.

PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL: 9.30 M; 10.30 Euch, Canon P Woodward; 3.30 E, The Fourth Service (Batten).

PORTSMOUTH CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.30 C; 11 S Euch, Missa Brevis (Berkeley); 6.30 E, Archdeacon of Portsmouth.

ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 M, Ferguson in C; 10.30 S Euch; 3.15 E.

SALISBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 Euch; 11.30 M, Harris in A, Canon P Roberts; 3 E.

SHEFFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 MP; 10.30 S Euch; 6.30 E & Sermon.

SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL: 9 Euch; 11 Ch Euch; 3 Ch E, Sumsion in G.

SOUTHWELL MINSTER: 7.45 Litany; 8 HC; 9.30 C; 11 M; 3.15 Christingle Service; 4.30 E; 5.45 Compline.

TRURO CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9 M; 10 S Euch, Messe Solennelle (Vierne); 3 St John Ambulance Service; 6 E.

WAKEFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.15 C; 11 Solemn Euch, Jackson in G; 4 E.

WELLS CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 S Euch; 11.30 M; 3 E, Bairstow in D, Rev J H Parfitt; 6 Carol Service.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY: 8 HC; 10 M; 11.15 Euch; 3 E, Purcell in G minor; 5.45 Recital by Maria Vocalis; 6.30 ES.

WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL: 7, 8, 9 Mass; 10.30 Solemn Mass; 12 Mass; 2.45 Organ Recital; 3.30 Solemn V, Magnificat octavi toni (Victoria); 5.30, 7 Mass.

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 10 M; 11.15 S Euch; 3.30 E, Third Service (Byrd).

YORK MINSTER: 7.30 M; 8, 8.45 HC; 10 S Euch; Missa Brevis (Leighton); 11.30 S Euch; 2 St John Ambulance Carol Service; 4 E; 7.30 Festival Concert.

ST ALBAN'S CATHEDRAL, Hertfordshire: 8 HC; 9.30 Euch; 11 M; 12.15 HC; 3.30 Christingle Service; 6.30 E.

ST ASAPH CATHEDRAL, Clwyd: 8 HC; 11 Ch Euch, Rev K Goulstone; 3.30 Ch E.

ST DAVIDS CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.30 Cymun Bendigaid; 11.15 Ch M, Noble in B minor; 6 Ch E, The Dean.

ST GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL, Southwark: 8, 10 LM; 11.30 Solemn Mass, Mass for 4 voices (Byrd); 6 LM.

ST GILES' CATHEDRAL, Edinburgh: 8 MS; 10 HC, Mass in G minor (Vaughan Williams); 11.30 MS; 6 Organ Recital; 8 ES.

ST MACHAR'S CATHEDRAL, Old Aberdeen: 11 MS, Rev R Frazer; 6 HC.

ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL, Edinburgh: 8 Euch; 10.30 S Euch; 3.30 Ch E; Sexti toni (Victoria); 6.30 Sung Compline.

ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL, Glasgow: 8.30 Euch; 10 S Euch; 12 HC; 6.30 Ch E.

ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, Dublin: 8.30 Euch; 11.15 S Euch, 5 part Mass (Byrd); 3.15 Ch E, Rev D Williams.

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 8.45 M; 11 S Euch, Missa Brevis (Palestrina); 3.15 E, Gray in F minor, Rev P King.

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL, SW7: 10.30 Divine Liturgy, Kievan and traditional polophony, Met Anthony.

ALL SAINTS, W1: 8 LM; 10.20 MP; 11 HM; 5.15 LM; 6 E & B.

ALL SOULS, W1: 8 C; 9.30, 11.30 MP, Rev T Rice; 6.30 Carol Service.

THE ASSUMPTION, W1: 11 MS, Missa Brevis (Seiber).

CHELSEA OLD CHURCH, SW3: 8 HC; 10 Children's Service; 11 C, Rev P Elvy; 6 E, Rev D Bean.

FARM STREET, W1: 8, 9.30 LM; 11 HM; 12.30 LM; 4.15 Mass; 6.15 LM.

HOLY TRINITY BROMPTON, SW7: 9 HC; 11 MS, 5, 7.30 Informal Service.

THE ORATORY, SW7: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 Mass, Missa Dixit Joseph (Lassus); 12.30 Mass; 3.30 V & B; 4.30, 7 Mass.

ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH W8: 11 Holy Mass, Archbishop Y Gizirian.

WESLEY'S CHAPEL, EC2: 11 MS & HC for Bible Sunday, Rev Dr L Griffiths.

WESTMINSTER CENTRAL HALL (Methodist): 11 HC; 6.30 Evening Praise, Rev Dr P Graves.

ST ANNE AND ST AGNES (Lutheran), Gresham St, EC2: 11 Ch Euch, Rev P D Schmiege; 2 Swahili HC; 7 Luther's German Mass.

ST BARTHOLOMEW THE GREAT, EC1: 9 HC; 11 Ch Euch, Missa Bell' amfitrit' altera (Lassus), The Rector; 6.30 Advent music & readings.

ST BRIDE'S, EC4: 11 Ch M & Euch, Robinson in C, Canon J Oates; 6.30 Ch E, Handel's Messiah.

ST CLEMENT DANES, WC2: 11 Ch Euch, Missa Aeterna Christi Munera (Palestrina), Rev D Mackenzie.

ST COLUMBA'S CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, SW1: 11, Rev J H McIndoe; 6.30 Rev W A Cairns.

ST ETHELDREDA'S, EC1: 11 Sung Mass, Missa Trahe me post te (Victoria).

ST GEORGE'S, W1: 8.30 HC; 11 S Euch, Missa Brevis (Berkeley).

ST JAMES'S, Garlickhythe, EC4: 10.30 S Euch, St James' Choir, Rev J Paul.

ST JAMES'S, W2: 10.30 S Euch, Mass for 4 voices (Byrd), Rev B Wilson; 6 Ch E.

ST JAMES'S, W1: 8.30 HC; 11 S Euch; Rev M Robbins; 5.45 EP.

ST JOHN'S, E15: 11 HC, Prelude & Fugue in E minor (Bach); 6.30 EP.

ST LUKE'S, SW3: 8 HC; 10.30 S Euch, Adoramus te (Palestrina); 12.15 HC; 6.30 E, Rev C Kevill-Davies.

ST MARK'S, NW1: 8 HC; 9.45 Family C; 11 S Euch, Rev T Devonshire-Jones.

ST MARGARET'S, SW1: 11 S Euch & Baptism, Missa aeterna Christie munera (Palestrina), Canon D Gray.

ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS, WC2: 8 HC; 9.45 Euch; 11.30 Visitors' Service; 2.45 Chinese Service in the crypt; 3 Salvation Army Carol Service; 5.30 Blessing of the crib in Trafalgar Square; 6.30 ES.

ST MARY ABBOTS CHURCH, W8: 8 HC; 9.30 Euch, Fr M Fuller; 11.15 Ch M, Fr F Gelli; 12.30 HC; 6.30 E.

ST MARY'S, SW1: 9, 10 LM; 11 HM, Mass for 4 voices (Byrd); 6 Solemn E & B; 7 LM.

ST MARY-THE-VIRGIN, NW3: 8 HC; 10.30 Euch, Short Service (Batten); 6 EP.

ST MARYLEBONE, NW1: 8 HC; 11 Ch Euch, Missa Brevis (Palestrina); 6.30 Healing Service, Rev J Caldwell.

ST PETER'S, SW1: 8.15 HC; 10 Family Euch; 11 S Euch, Missa Canonica (Brahms), Fr D B Tillyer.

CHAPEL ROYAL OF ST PETER AD VINCULA, HM Tower of London: 9.15 HC; 11 M & Sermon, Rev P R C Abram; 7 Residents Informal Service.

CHAPEL ROYAL, St James's Palace: 8.30 HC; 11.15 S Euch, Darke in E, Canon L F Webber.

GROSVENOR CHAPEL, South Audley St, W1: 11 S Euch, Missa O magnum mysterium (Victoria), Bishop of Iceland.

QUEEN'S CHAPEL OF THE SAVOY, WC2: 11 S Euch, The Chaplain.

GRAY'S INN CHAPEL, WC1: 11.15 S Euch.

THE TEMPLE CHURCH, EC4: 8.30 HC; 11.15 MP, Stanford in C, The Master.

GUARDS CHAPEL, Wellington Barracks, SW1: 11 Ch HC, Stravinsky Mass, Band of the Blues and Royals.

ROYAL NAVAL COLLEGE CHAPEL, SE10: 11 S Euch, Casciolini, Rev R Nunton.

هكذا من الأصل

The latest reaction of the nanny state to forbid the sale of beef on the bone should be resisted by all sensible citizens, says **Gerald Long**

Making a meal out of marrowbone

Successive British governments care nothing for symbols: otherwise they would not have destroyed one of the great institutions that for centuries has symbolised the attachment of the English, in particular, to solid good quality and simple good living: the Roast Beef of Old England.

In the 18th century it was already an article of faith. Hogarth's famous caricature of the Calais Gate shows a great piece of beef destined for local English consumption being carried past pop-eyed Frenchmen, thin as rakes. In the mid-19th century, Thackeray invited his readers to imagine 100,000 Frenchmen fed on soup, turnips, carrots, onions and cheese fighting the same number of Englishmen who had just dined off beef.

The mishandling of the BSE crisis from the beginning had already undermined this culinary confidence: the Government order that all beef must be boned has given it the *coup de grâce*. The reaction among our European partners will inevitably be that the British have once again taken leave of their senses. They have watched in disbelief as we were first told not to eat soft-boiled eggs or mayonnaise, then as we alternately published every scare story about the dangers of beef-eating while proclaiming insistently that British beef was not only the best in the world but also the safest.

I heard a Government spokesman say this week that the boning order would increase confidence in British beef. If he believes that, he will believe anything.

It seems to me that the sensible course throughout this whole miserable affair would have been to publish the various so-called expert reports, which often contradict one another, soberly and without undue emphasis, and let us decide what we eat.

But now the nanny state has followed its convictions and told us that it knows what is good for us.

This goes too far: people are not so stupid nor so easily led as their political masters believe. I hope for a nationwide bone rebellion to demonstrate the good sense and robust energy of the British, and especially the English, and to dispel the irresolute, limp-wristed impression presented to the nation and the world by politicians who regard leading-reins as the instrument to guide Britain to a new dawn.

UNP

Rare sight: beef on the bone

It was a relief to hear the Smithfield porters say they had been given no instructions and would continue to deliver meat on the bone: if it had to be boned, let the butchers bone it. I suppose it is too much to hope that the butchers will provide beef on the bone to those who ask for it. But what do they risk by so doing? Are we to have boning squads, flying filleters making the rounds of butchers' shops? What penalties will be applied to bone dealers? Will Simpson's-in-the Strand and the Savoy Grill tamely give up the spectacular rib-roasts that have made their reputation? If the boning order is ignored for the nonsense it is, the Government will shrink before the draconian measures that would be needed to enforce it.

There was an extremely nervous reaction in France at the time of the first BSE scare and beef consumption dropped. This despite there being very little BSE reported in France and its policy of slaughtering the whole herd in which cases occurred. There were reports in the press that calf's head, the favourite dish of President Chirac, would be banned, along with oxtail, lamb's brains, sweetbreads and offal generally. The price of calves' liver, regarded as a precious food for invalids and children, plummeted. I must confess I was depressed by these reports. But within a fortnight calf's head was back on restaurant menus, together with all the other reputedly dangerous foods.

There is a difference between Government advice on a healthy diet and the first step on the road to control of our shopping, our kitchens, our dinner-plates. It is true that red meat is not the healthiest food and it may well be that the vegetarians are right, morally and practically, but these are matters about which we must all be allowed to make up our own minds.

We did not have to wait for the latest "expert" report to know that there are dangers in grills and roasts. Harold McGee, in his monumental work *On Food and Cooking*, writes: "... the browning reactions that make fried and roasted food so appealing also generate compounds that have mutagenic and carcinogenic activity". Meats grilled over charcoal are reported to be especially dangerous in this regard, but the reports have not, as far as I know, caused the Americans to give up their barbecues.

You might think it matters little whether beef is boned or not, but in fact the absence or presence of bone has an important effect on cooking. Boned beef, usually tied up and thus compacted, loses the juices that come from the bone and add flavour: it takes longer to cook and has a tendency to dry out.

According to Henry Thoreau, "it is life near the bone where it is sweetest". Europe is waiting to see whether the British will give up this sweetness simply at the behest of a minister, or whether we will rally to the support of that roast meat which is universally acknowledged to be the glory of our cuisine.

TIM HELLIN

Oh my, it must be an ormer

Strictly legal: Rohan Daft (second left) finds an ormer in Jersey. Catches are usually kept for the fisherman and his family. The ormer is protected by rigorous laws stipulating how and when it can be fished

Rohan Daft follows the trail of ultra-rare shellfish from the Jersey shores to London's Chinatown

Jersey, the most southerly and largest of the Channel Islands, and rightly renowned for its new potatoes, milk, cream and easy, tax-free living, is also the home of the ormer. This mysterious, ear-shaped shellfish, a smaller cousin of the abalone, is extremely rare and utterly delicious. It is also protected by rigorous laws saying how and when it can be fished, and is a source of much pride among the islanders.

By the time the precious shellfish reach the restaurants of London's Chinatown, having passed through a cloak-and-dagger world of anonymous telephone tip-offs, speedboat chases, new moons, coded asides in harbourside bars and large amounts of hard cash, they also represent perhaps the strangest contraband that is slipping past Customs and Excise and on to the mainland.

To find an ormer is not easy. Traditionally and legally, they are the prey of low-water fishermen, for the most part local amateurs who pluck them from the rocks at low tide. This practice is still known locally as "going down the tide", and finding a dozen or so of the things in one go would, to most, be deemed a triumph and a more than ample "feed".

Come the March and September equinoxes and the lowest tides, a flotilla of small boats will set out for the then exposed Minquiers, the massive reef that lies ten miles south of the island. For any Jerseyman with a taste for ormers the Minquiers is a place of legend. The catches can be memorable.

"I had 322 there once," remembers Guinea Channing, 76, a bluff old fisherman who I met in a pub by the French Harbour. For a low-water fisherman that would still be an extraordinary haul. But for the other Ormer gatherers, the illegal ones, it is not, as Mr Channing whispered to me over a sticky little table studded with pints of lager and a shots of whisky.

I made my way, studying every restaurant menu I saw, to the fishmarket on Beresford Street. The demand for ormers is not immediately obvious in Jersey because most low-water fishermen keep their catches for themselves or give them to friends and family. Because of this, they rarely reach the restaurants and fish markets. But the demand is there and it is strong.

"If someone has had a good day low-water fishing and they've got 50 ormers that they want to sell, I'll take them," one fishmonger said. "If they're at least the legal size [a minimum of 3in across at the longest point — a good ormer is 4in-5in across] I pay £1.25 and I sell them for £1.75. If I put them on sale at 8am they're gone by 9am.

"It's very rare that I get offered them, though. The thriving market is the black one. Last Christmas, one guy I know made himself £15,000 selling ormers. Obviously, he didn't catch them all in one go. He had them in his freezer and come the word, he emptied them out. They went to London, to the Chinese."

The taxi driver who took me from the airport to St Helier had suggested with a wink that I visit La Folie Inn, by the Old Harbour, if I wanted to find out a little more about ormers. Perhaps it was the gateway to Chinatown. With lino on the floor and Formica on the bar, The Folie, as it is known locally, is used by fishermen and Friday lunchtime is a busy time. They were a surprisingly friendly, if slightly wary, bunch.

I bought a round of drinks and sat down. One, Steve, told me the basic rules for catching ormers. "There's got to be an R in the month and you can't use breathing apparatus." Another, Alan, gave me a tip about cooking them: "Never take the black off. That's pure iodine."

And then, eventually, to the chagrin of a number of the others and accompanied by a low groan of "Oh God, don't tell him that", one whose name I did not get told me he would put me in touch with a "diver".

"It's £18 to £20 a dozen they cost. That's top. The biggest black market is the Chinese in London. They pass them off as abalones." I hurriedly jotted my hotel number down on a scrap of paper and handed it over. But, perhaps because they were unsure of my reason for inquiring, no one called.

The way the "divers" go about getting their ormers is, unsurprisingly, by diving for them with face masks and breathing apparatus. For more information I sought out Simon Bossy of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in St Helier, the man whose job it is to apprehend the divers. "Legislation against diving was introduced 35 years ago," he said. And the fact that illegal divers now face £50,000 fines and the confiscation of their boats gives some idea of the real value of the ormer market.

"The first regulations came in soon after diving became a popular sport. The public wanted the legislation to protect the ormers. They take four years to grow to the minimum size of three inches at which they can be legally caught. Very few people go low-water fishing and sell them. They eat them or give them to relatives. It's a family thing."

Legislation did not work because to be prosecuted successfully divers had to be caught in the act of actually diving; mere possession was not an offence. So, in 1995, the law regarding the fishing for and possession of ormers changed again.

"We made it legal," Mr Bossy said, "to be in possession of ormers only at certain times of the year. These times relate to the moon."

HOW ORMERS CLIMB IN VALUE

Pickers sell them in Jersey for **£1.70 each**

Sold to middleman for **£2.50 each**

Sold to restaurant for **£3.50 each**

Sold to customer for **£7.50 each**

Prices for single ormers on black market

As wonderfully surreal as this sounds, would-be ormerers are now greeted on the beaches of Jersey with posters that clearly lay down the rules. No ormers may be gathered between May and August. And during the season "fishing may only take place on the first day of each new or full moon and the three following days".

Furthermore, with regard to the possession of ormers, "It is now an offence either to possess fresh ormers or export ormers at any time other than between September 1 and April 30 and then on the first day of each full or new moon and the five following days."

The term "fresh" does not include frozen, cured or otherwise preserved, so those low-water fishermen wishing to freeze down a "feed" to be eaten out of season may still do so.

To prosecute the divers successfully, Mr Bossy and his men must catch them in possession of ormers and diving equipment, or in the act of exporting them during the close season. It is not easy.

"We have a 35ft patrol boat and high-speed rigid inflatables that can do 40 knots," said Mr Bossy. "There is no limit to the fines and that is an escalating situation. Japanese and oriental people in London are very keen to get them. The market has increased in the past ten years."

However, there is little room for outsiders to break into it. The islanders — and even though some simply deny that "diving" exists, I got the impression that most people with even half an interest in local matters know who the perpetrators are — will not tolerate it.

Jersey swears its allegiance to the Crown, not any British government, and the best traditions of *Whisky Galore* are very much alive on the island.

This attitude also serves to ensure that the illegal gathering of ormers is pretty much self-regulating. The divers will not over-fish them because they obviously do not want to ruin a lucrative sideline and, equally obviously, they will not let anyone else do so either. So if the locals see any outsiders — who tend to be French — diving for ormers, Mr Bossy is likely to be tipped off. "We had an incident four weeks ago," he said. "We got a phone call saying a boat 12 miles south was acting suspiciously. We were there in 45 minutes but the other boat aborted its operation and went off at high speed. It was doing 45 knots and we could only do 40 knots.

"Generally in these situations people dump their ormers over the side because they obviously don't want to be caught with them. But we have caught people with hundreds of them before now."

Not me, though. It would have taken me a good wad of cash and rather more than a weekend on Jersey to have got hold of a few hundred of the things. I did not leave empty-handed, however.

For this I must thank David Dodge, a super-keen and completely legal ormerer who runs the island's Vienna Bakery, and also his friends from the Old Smuggler Inn in the village of Ouaisne. The low tide of November 15 saw us — half a dozen reasonably sane men — splashing around in the water. It was 13C. I was fully clothed and wet up to my waist, others were dressed in shorts and one, Pete, was dressed in a wetsuit (minus face mask and breathing apparatus, of course), and kept throwing himself under the water.

This, I was told, was not an unusual Jersey scene. And I was also told that due to the fact that the tide was not particularly low and the barometer was not too high, we would be lucky if we found any ormers at all.

Thankfully, in the end, Pete got four of them. After a couple of hours in the water, we retired to the pub where, soaking wet and minus shoes and socks, I tried the ormers raw and then sliced very thinly and fried with butter and garlic over an open fire (which at the same time was drying my socks, incidentally).

Firm, fresh and meaty, the ormers were delicious. But not as delicious as they were for lunch the next day.

By then they had been braised in veal stock for 18 hours and came with mash and good bread to mop up the gravy. They were fantastic: firm in texture and incredibly rich. The flavour was truffle-like in its intensity and there was a slight tang of the sea but, in reality, they tasted like nothing else.

Last week, back in London and with my new-found taste for ormers now well developed, I thought I would drop into the New Hoo Wah restaurant in Gerrard Street, in the heart of Chinatown, for lunch.

Yes, they had abalone. They were frozen and they came with either Sea Cucumber, Fish's Lips, Green Vegetables, or Chinese Mushrooms. They cost £15 for two — save for the lobster, the most expensive items on the menu. I ate them with Green Vegetables and an oyster mushroom sauce. They looked just like the ormers I had eaten in Jersey but were smaller. However, they were also delicious.

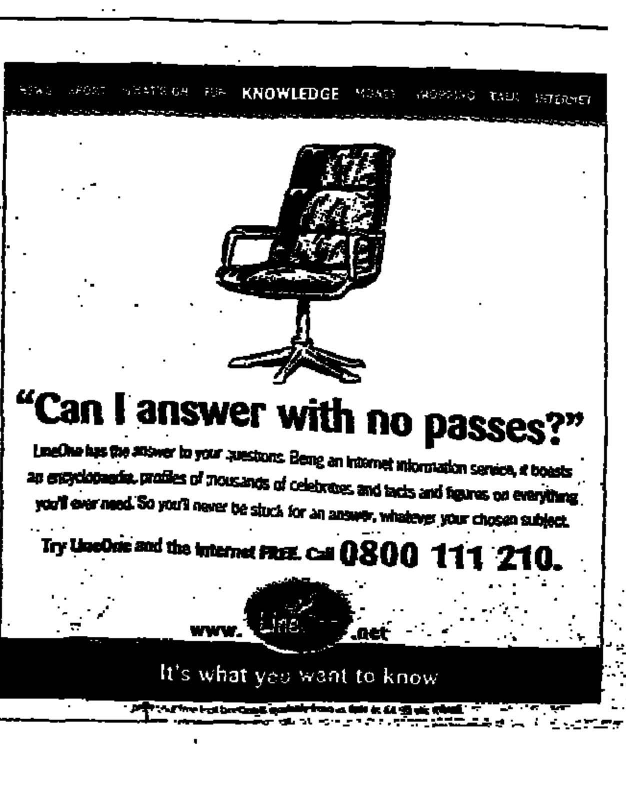
I asked Mr Chan, the restaurant's manager, where he got them. Through Sun Wah, a wholesaler, he said. Sun Wah got them from Jersey and Spain. They were very popular, he went on, with Chinese and Japanese people.

I told him I knew that and asked if he knew anything about the black market for Jersey ormers. "This I don't know about," he answered quickly — and finally.

● *Rohan Daft flew to Jersey with BA and stayed at The Revere Hotel, Kensington Place, St Helier, Jersey JE2 3PA (01534 611111). Jersey Tourism, 38 Dover Street, London W1X 3RB (0171-493 5278)*

DENZIL McNEELANCE

Enjoying abalones at the New Hoo Wah restaurant



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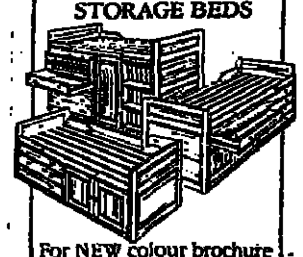

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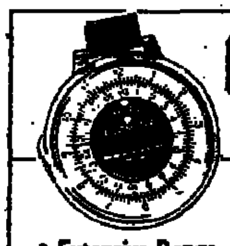

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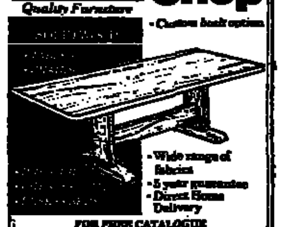

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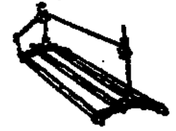

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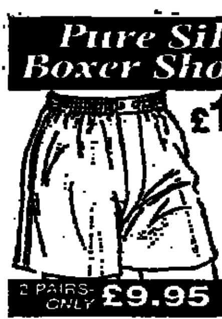

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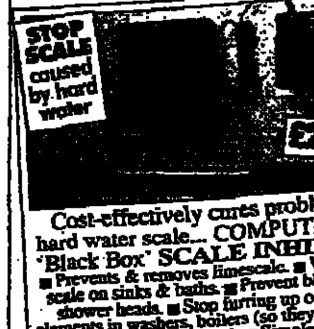

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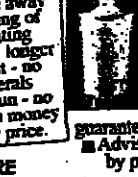

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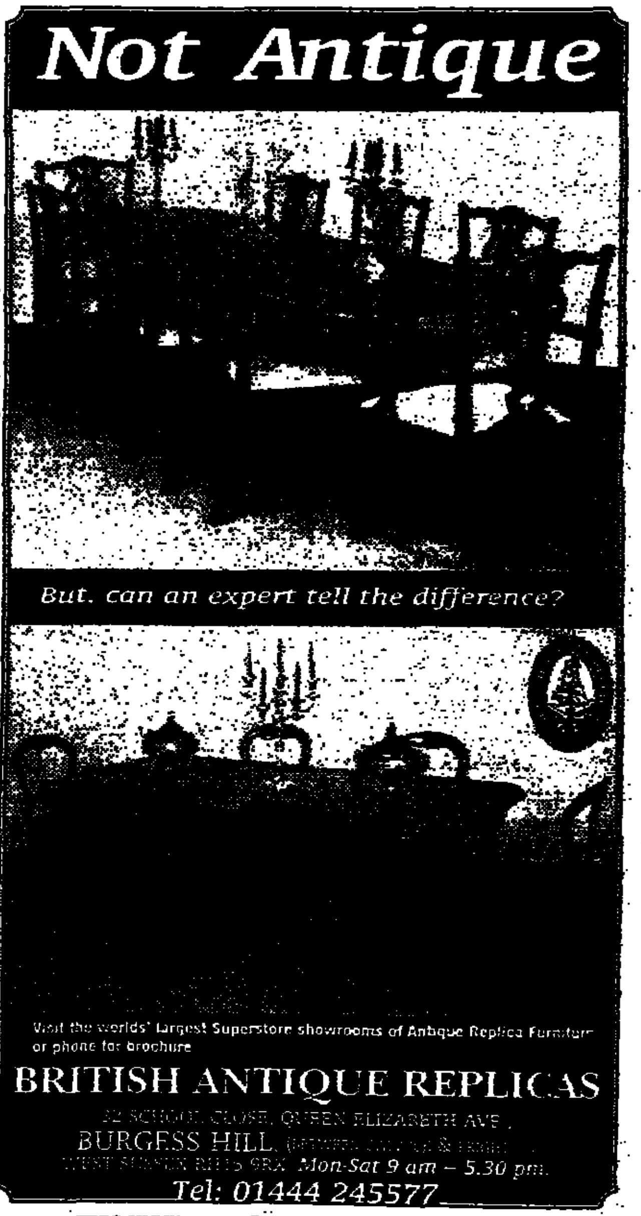

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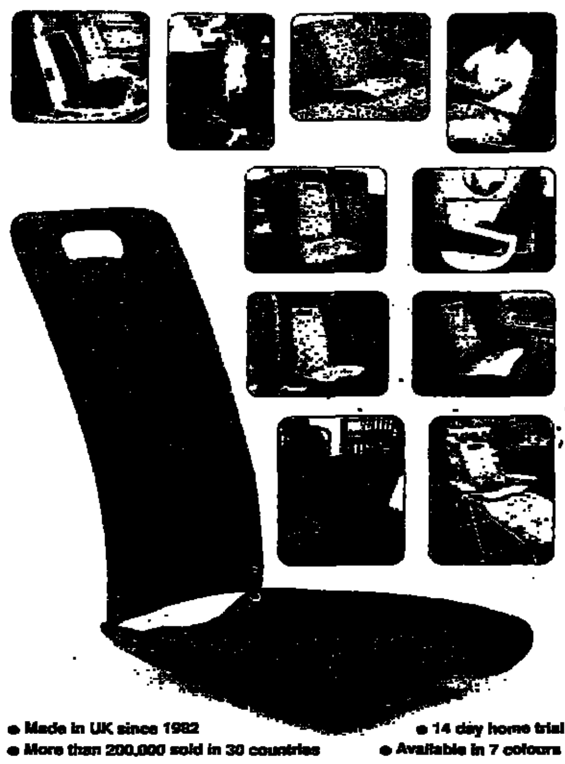

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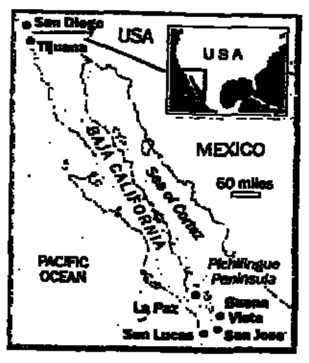


Off the Baja peninsula, **Mark Herbert** is hooked on fishing for marlin

PLANET EARTH PICTURES

Mexico's Baja peninsula has some of the best big-game fishing in the world, especially marlin, but nine out of ten are put back. Only trophy-size fish or those which have been deep-hooked are kept

It is a long, difficult journey from Britain to Mexico's Baja peninsula and not many people make it. Once in Los Angeles, however, the route to a connecting flight is clearly signposted: you follow what looks like a convention of caber-tossers. They are on a pilgrimage to arguably the best fishing grounds in the world, and take the pastime seriously enough to bring their own rods in plastic drainpipes.

Mexico tried to sell Baja California, the 700-mile long peninsula dangling off North America's Pacific coast, to the United States for a snip after the countries made peace in 1848. The Americans saw only mountains, poverty and deserts and declined. It proved an expensive mistake.

A century later, a trickle of Hollywood types began flying to Cabo San Lucas, a cannery village at the land's end, lured by tales of fabulous big-game fishing and the remoteness they craved. Today, the trickle is a flood and as you negotiate the bureaucratic purgatory of Los Angeles Airport, you wonder whether Uncle Sam should have shelled out the bucks all those years ago and recouped by cutting corners on immigration.

Cabo San Lucas is the principal resort of the Mexican state of Baja California Sur. It might as well have been sold to the Americans. It is a brash, vibrant, ugly place that grows visibly with each dawn. The talk of the town is a new bar with lap dancers. There are beggars and touts on every corner selling timeshare, fishing, golf, whale-watching tours and sunset cruises.

Visitors for whom none of these things are important pass through and head east for San José or La Paz. For the fishing fraternity, what happens on land is secondary. The cool Pacific Ocean to the west and the warm Sea of Cortez to the east have combined to create a diverse broth of maritime life. At the top of the marine food chain are the great game fish: marlin, swordfish, tuna, shark and grouper; and above them are the men — and women — who come to hunt them.

The prime target is marlin and the prime location Buena Vista, a balmy village fringed by palms on the East Cape, close to the southern tip of Baja California. Sixty miles south of La Paz lies the Buena Vista Resort, a lush oasis laid in neat stuccoed terraces that breathes fish and fishermen, from the wrought-iron sculpture of leaping billfish in front of reception to the aquarium in the restaurant.

Each day begins in the same way. At dawn, a mobile pontoon is laid on the sea and ignitions spark in a score of boats. The skippers load coolboxes, drinks, tackle and, finally, their charges. Fishermen on board, the boats radiate at full throttle to the open sea.

At the foot of the social scale, boatwise, is the *panga*, a 22ft skiff with an outboard engine and a skipper; status, and price, increase towards the cruisers. The fishing is good enough not to make a difference, but the hand-to-hand combat that comes with fighting big fish in a small boat adds to the attraction.

My first marlin was hooked just 15 minutes from the shore. Juan, the skipper, spotted the triangular fin and great sickle tail of a basking fish and we fell into a routine that was to become familiar: throttle back to edge the *panga* around the fish, cast a live mackerel 25 yards into its path, then wait, heart pounding, with a wisp of line between your fingers.

The tail beats once, decisively, and the marlin slides out of sight. The frantic movement of the bait is replaced by a jolt, then the line peels off unstoppably. You count ten breathless seconds and strike: jag the rod to set the hook, then watch the reel smoke as the fish dives.

An hour later, the fish and I wallowed exhausted against the side of the boat. It was a striped marlin of around 150lb, Buena Vista's standard fare. Nine out of ten are put back. Only trophy-size fish or those deep-hooked are kept. I elected to release my catch.

As Juan bent to release the hook it thrashed wildly against the hull. Its parting riposte was a Zorro-like slash to Juan's cheek with its bill before it dived for the deep.

Mark and his dorado

This was the first of several marlin. Two broke the line and several ignored the bait. The second one I caught leapt and tailwalked its way to exhaustion within 20 minutes.

The athleticism of these marine greyhounds is legendary. Once, as Juan prepared to cast to a basking fish, I bungled the steering and dropped the *panga* almost on top of the dozing fish. It dived, then erupted furiously 8ft into the air behind the stern. Ten huge leaps in as many seconds took it 100 yards from us and although we chased at full throttle, we were way behind when it gave up its private decathlon and slid out of sight.

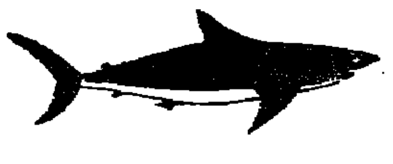
You wonder, then, whether to congratulate or commiserate with the holders of the resort record: three guys from Idaho who hooked their fish on Saturday and came back on Sunday after 22 hours spent being hauled in a 40-mile circuit by a 950lb blue marlin.

If fishing pales, the coast around the East Cape is a delight of deserted shores, rocky reefs and emerald waters full of life, but you need a car or canoe to explore them. Better, and more accessible, beaches are found further north on the Pichilingue peninsula, the thumb of land that protects La Paz. The best is Playa Balandra, a glorious half-mile shallow bowl ten miles from town.

In spite of the town's growing pains, the things that are good around Cabo San Lucas are still cheap. Food and drink cost little and its craft shops sell incredible silver, pewter, glass and leather.

Finally, there is La Concha, the most romantic restaurant in the world. It sits halfway between Cabo San Lucas and San José. There are a couple of palm-thatched rondavels above a perfect tide pool where you can swim with brilliant coral fish, safe from the growling waves rolling in from the Pacific.

I celebrated my birthday with lobster, fish and shellfish, all straight from the sea. The air was still enough to hear a whale breathe at 100 yards. The restaurant watched entranced as a young humpback made its way along the coast, throwing up curtains of white water as it leapt and cavorted. Nobody said a word as it ploughed towards the sunset. No words were needed.



FISH FACTS

■ **Getting there:** Flights to Los Cabos International Airport (for Cabo San Lucas) operate via several US cities. Aero California also flies direct from Los Angeles to La Paz. Prices with Going Places (0541 555334), for example, start at £507 return for flights between December 25-March 31 to Los Angeles and onwards to La Paz.

British Airways (0345 222111) flies direct to Mexico City. Onward flights to Los Cabos are with Mexicana or Aero Mexico. BA/Mexicana prices to Los Cabos start at £618 return until March 31.

The Buena Vista Beach Resort (001 619 425 1551) offers a five-day, four-night package: prices start at $815 (£485) in high season, April-July. The package includes two days' fishing on a *panga*.

■ **The Cortez Club** (01273 731144) organises sports holidays around La Paz. Six nights at the five-star La Concha Beach Resort on the Pichilengue peninsula, based on two sharing and including flights, transfers, two days' fishing on a *panga*, and an overnight stay at the Wyndham Hotel in Los Angeles, start at £900 (room only, excluding taxes). The Club can arrange diving charters, live-aboard safaris, sailing craft hire and other watersports.

■ **Other tour operators** with inclusive packages to Baja California include Latin American Travel (0171-630 0070), which has 10-day tours of Baja, starting at £1,600. Sunset Travel (0171-498 9922) features Los Cabos — prices start at £927 for seven nights, with Air France flights via Paris. Cathy Matos Mexican Tours (0171-267 3757) also operates to the region and fishing expeditions can be arranged locally.

■ **The Fishing News:** Tackle for marlin, dorado, roosterfish, tuna and jacks needs to be robust — 30lb or 50lb class boat rods with lever-drag multipliers. Shore fishing is extraordinarily good too, with big-game species possible off some beaches. British-style beachcasters are too flimsy: use uptide or light boat rods, heavy casting multipliers with 30lb line, and live bait. Spinning and fly fishing are also productive.

■ **When to go:** It hardly ever rains between October and April: avoid August, when most of Central America is on holiday.

■ **Further reading:** *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*, by John Steinbeck (Mandarin, £5.99); *Cabo Handbook*, by Joe Cummings (Moon, £9.95); *The World Atlas of Sportfishing*, by Ken Schultz (Hamlyn) *Mexico*, (Lonely Planet, £12.95).

■ **For further information:** Mexico Ministry of Tourism (0171-734 1058).

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Day 3 Moscow. In the morning drive to Klin for a visit to Tchaikovsky's home. Afternoon visit to the Tretyakov Gallery. Sail in the late afternoon.
Day 4 Uglich. Morning cruising the Volga. Afternoon visit to Uglich. See the Church of St John and the Cathedral of the Resurrection. Tsarevich Dmitri, the last son of Ivan the Terrible was murdered here an event which formed the background to Pushkin's drama and Mussorgsky's opera Boris Godunov.
Day 5 Kostroma. Before the Revolution Kostroma was a great centre of the arts and home to the Romanovs and Godunovs. Today it is one of the loveliest cities of the Golden Ring. See the historic centre including the Ipatyevsky Monastery and drive to nearby Plyos a charming Volga town where Isaac Levitan, perhaps the best of all Volga landscape painters produced his best work. Visit the gallery before returning to Kostroma.
Day 6 Yaroslavl. A city of cupolas and spires where aristocratic classicism blends with typical Russian mercantile colour creating a city of great interest. Prince Andrei Bolkonsky from Tolstoy's 'War & Peace' died here and this was also the site of Russia's first National Theatre and first provincial newspaper. See the 17th century Church of Elijah the Prophet and explore its ancient streets.
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Day 9 Svir Stroy. Today we will stop at a small settlement on the River Stroy which links the two great lakes of Onega and Ladoga. It is a charming area of farms and forests and ideal for country walk.
Day 10 St Petersburg. Morning city drive around St Petersburg's aristocratic palaces and a visit to the Russian Museum which specialises in Russian art from the 18th century onwards. Afternoon visit to the Pushkin Palace. Evening performance at the Mariinsky Theatre (subject to suitable performance).
Day 11 St Petersburg. Morning visit to the incomparable Hermitage Museum. After lunch there will be a tour of the Rimsky-Korsakov Museum. Evening ballet performance at the restored intimate theatre in the Winter Palace which was once the personal theatre of Catherine the Great.
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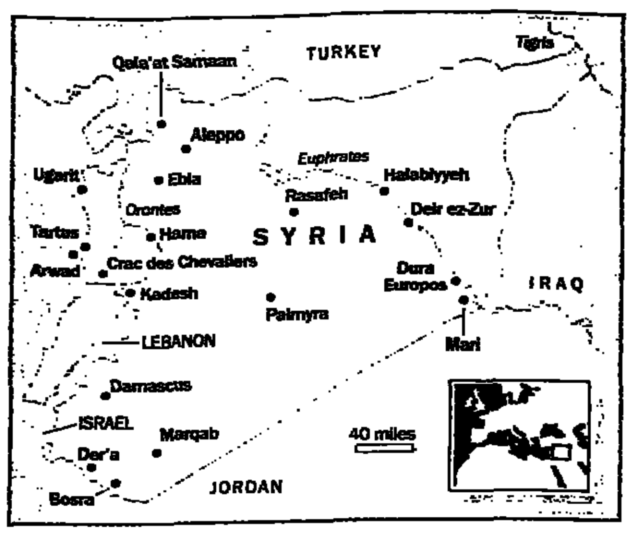
Syria: *Times* archaeology correspondent **Norman Hammond** is awestruck by its ancient relics

Country with a reputation in ruins



IMPACT

Part of the Grand Colonnade of Palmyra, the "Hong Kong of its age" and city of the warrior queen Zenobia who swept all before her as she conquered Egypt and Anatolia

On my first night in Damascus I blew £100 on drinks and smokes at the Paradise Café. Luckily the drinks were coffee — thick, sweet and laced with cardamom — the smoke was from a *nargileh*, a hubble-bubble pipe filled with *tufa*, an apple-scented tobacco, and the pounds were Syrian, at around 65 to the British pound.

Men sat in pairs or in fours, playing backgammon or cards in the evening warmth, and over the hedge was the dark shadow of the ancient locomotive of the Hejaz Railway, which once ran from here to Medina until Lawrence of Arabia blew it up.

I thought of Lawrence a couple of days later. We had explored Damascus in the footsteps of earlier travellers from the Great Mosque to the "Street Called Straight", where St Paul found refuge in his blindness, and had driven south into the volcanic landscape of the Jebel Druze towards Der'a.

This is where he was captured, though not recognised, by the Turks and had the unfortunate encounter with the bey dramatised in *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. We recognised Lawrence's landscapes from his evocative descriptions, but our target was older even than the Crusader castles that had brought him to Syria as an undergraduate.

We were bound for the great Roman ruins of Bosra, the first stop on an anti-clockwise archaeological circuit of the country that would take us east to the Euphrates, close to the Iraqi and Turkish borders, and back to the Mediterranean and the foothills of the mountains of Lebanon.

We were led by Dr Jonathan Tubb of the British Museum, an expert on the Bronze Age who digs in Jordan but who knows Syria and the archaeologists who work there. This stood us in good stead later in the trip, when the enthusiasts for *tells* (ancient city mounds) — about two-thirds of our group of 17 — hired a freelance minibus for the day from Aleppo and went off to look at these mounds and their current excavations along the upper Euphrates.

There was a creative tension throughout the tour between those who wanted to see as much archaeology as possible in our 12 days even if it meant getting to the hotel late, and those who wanted to reach the comfort of the hotel in time to relax before dinner.

Emily Stokely, Andante Travels' young tour manager, who is an Oxford graduate in Classical Chinese, our Syrian guide Ali (a pharmacist moonlighting from his official job) and our long-suffering driver Yusuf were left to pick up the tatters of the daily schedule.

Bosra was a revelation: an entire Roman city, once the capital of the province of Arabia, with its theatre preserved by incorporation into a medieval fortress, and studded with early churches and some of the oldest surviving mosques in Islam.

Along the main street, a *cryptoporticus* (a cool storage cellar) more than 100 yards long had been excavated with little sloping apertures lighting it from kerb-level.

The next day was one of dramatic contrasts. First, our leader Jonathan led us over dirt tracks to Kadesh, site of what the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* calls "perhaps the most famous battle of pre-Classical antiquity".

Here, in 1289 BC, the armies of the Pharaoh Ramses II and the Hittite king Mutawallis met in an indecisive engagement that both sides claimed as a victory, and which established the balance of power in the Middle East for long after.

A different kind of victory, if it can be called such, came to mind as we went into Hama to lunch beside the river Orontes with its huge creaking waterwheels. Here, in 1982, President Hafez al-Assad moved against the rebellious Muslim Brotherhood with tanks and allegedly poison gas; the death toll is variously estimated at 10,000 to 25,000. It was a brutal side to the regime that we saw nothing of — there were fewer men in uniform around than on an average day in London and none carried guns — and the evident prosperity of modern Syria is free of overt politics.

Local views are mixed. "If I criticised the government publicly, I would disappear," said one of my acquaintances in the Paradise Café, "but Assad saved us from the fundamentalists."

It was a relief to leave Hama — not all its demolished area has been rebuilt since 1982 — and travel across the flat, dry steppe to the more credible ruins of Palmyra. This was the city of the warrior-queen Zenobia who, for a brief period in AD 269-72, swept all before her as she conquered Egypt and Anatolia. Captured by the Emperor Aurelian as she tried to flee across the Euphrates on a camel, she reputedly ended her days in luxurious captivity at Tivoli near Rome.

Poised between the powers of Rome and Parthia, Palmyra was the Hong Kong of its age, devoted entirely to commerce. The treasurer outranked the legislature, and the baroque exuberance of its buildings, adorned with statues of the desert tycoons, fused the styles of Greece and Persia.

The "Bride of the Desert" has caught the imagination of artists and writers, from William Halifax's report to the Royal Society 300 years ago to John Fowles's *Daniel Martin*. The most noted record, Wood and Dawkins's *Ruins of Palmyra* in 1753, included geometric designs that were taken up by fashionable architects, including Robert Adam's Palmyrene ceilings at Osterley and Croome Court and George Pitt's dining room and library at Stratfield Saye.

Palmyra itself is remarkably unchanged from then, although French, German and Syrian archaeologists have excavated and restored several areas along the great colonnaded street (which, canopied over in Roman times must have looked much like the *souk* we visited in Aleppo).

The Valley of the Tombs is still as spooky as early travellers found it, its towering mausolea silent in the sunshine. Some were family vaults, each space marked with a stone bust of its occupant, but others, notably the Three Brothers hypogeum, a painted underground chamber, were commercial propositions, where slots for eternity were sold off.

Midday is best spent in the shade of the Hotel Zenobia's garden with a yeasty Syrian beer in hand, looking out on the charming little Temple of Bel-Shamin and the multitude of columns forming a panoramic backdrop beyond, but it is at dawn and at sunset that the ruins look most special with their ethereal golden glow. We had too little time there, rolling away across the cooling desert towards Deir ez-Zur on the Euphrates as the sun sank, although the air-conditioned luxury of the Cham Palace when we got there was some compensation.

It was even more welcome the next night as we trailed in from the hottest day of the trip, downriver almost to Iraq to visit the Bronze Age palace of Mari and the Parthian metropolis of Dura Europos.

Mari is famous for its archive of 20,000 clay tablets, the diplomatic and household records of the last ruler, Zimrilim, around 1760BC, and for the courtyards and storehouses which bear a striking resemblance to the Minoan palace of Knossos on Crete, another proto-historic city-state making its way in the world.

Dura, its citadel still towering above the Euphrates, is noted for the exotic cults it housed. A superbly decorated synagogue of AD 246 has been reconstructed in the national museum in Damascus, and an early church at Yale; temples to Mithras, Atargatis and other deities remain, along with what must be the smallest theatre in the classical world. The city fell to the Sassanian Persians, its massive ramparts weakened by mining and countermining until they collapsed, burying the sappers with their last pay still in their purses; the date on the latest coins pinpointed the siege to AD256. Abandoned cities occupied us as we drove upstream and then westwards to Aleppo — the Byzantine fortresses of Halabiyyeh and Rasafeh, the pilgrimage centre of Qala'at Samaan where St Simon Stylites sat on a pillar (still preserved as a stub) for 42 years, and the Bronze Age centres of Ebla and Ugarit. Ebla, like Mari, has yielded a tablet archive but one which includes grammars, dictionaries and school texts recording names familiar from the Old Testament in the late third millennium BC; Ugarit, a thousand years later, was an entrepôt like Palmyra, but on the Mediterranean coast and in nervous correspondence with Akhenaten's Egypt and Hittite Anatolia. In these bare ruined courts a knowledge and sense of history bring the walls to life. The most recent history that we encountered was that of the Crusader Kingdom. For almost two centuries, from AD 1099 to 1291, the Counts of Toulouse, the Regents of Antioch, the Templars and the Hospitallers ruled this strip of the Levantine coast, building a series of massive castles of European design, of which Crac des Chevaliers and Marqab are the most spectacular. European churches were built, too: the former cathedral at Tartus is a strikingly unmodified example of early French Gothic (now used as an archaeological museum).

Resurgent Islam and the military genius of Saladin and his Mameluke successors whittled away the fortresses and on August 3, 1291, the Crusaders abandoned Tartus, their last mainland stronghold, for the offshore islet of Arwad. We, too, took the short boat journey (for a fish lunch beside the castle walls) and remembered the last of the Templar knights who in 1302 were taken off to captivity in Cairo, ending the struggle for the Holy Land. Next day we left Syria, but unlike the Crusaders, I shall go back.

FACT FILE

- **Norman Hammond travelled with Andante Travels, Old Telephone Exchange, Winterbourne Dauntsey, Salisbury SP4 6EH (01980 610555, fax 610002), which is repeating this 12-day tour of Syria in October 1998.**
The price of £1,380 per person is based on two sharing and covers flights, full board accommodation, a guide and lecturer and a tour manager.
- **Andante is run by Dr Annabel Lawson, an archaeologist and an expert on the Roman army. It specialises in trips to places such as the palaeolithic painted caves of the Dordogne and Pyrenees, the Roman provinces around the Mediterranean, and medieval Europe from Hungary to Quercy.**
The company is branching out in its tour options, with a study of Namibian rock art in June 1998.

WORLD PICTURES

Midday is best spent in the shade of the Hotel Zenobia's garden, looking out on the Temple of Bel-Shamin

- **Syrian Arab Airlines (0171-493 2851) and British Airways (0345 222111) fly to Damascus from Heathrow: BA Superpex fares from £382. A Syrian visa is required, at £31.50 for UK passport holders, from the Syrian Embassy, 8 Belgrave Square, London SW1 (0171-245 9012). You will not get a visa if there are Israeli stamps in your passport. Typhoid and hepatitis A immunisations are recommended.**
- **There are Cham Hotels in Damascus, Aleppo, Bosra, Palmyra, Deir ez-Zur and several other towns. Room rates from approx £50-£120. Hotel Zenobia at Palmyra (00 963 31 910107, fax 912407) costs £35-40 per room. Car rental from Chamcars from about £43/day, £390/week.**
- **Reading: Robin Fedden *Syria and Lebanon* (1965) is still the best general introduction. Ross Burns' *Monuments of Syria: An Historical Guide* (IB Tauris, £18.95) is the best guide to archaeology. Lonely Planet publishes *Jordan & Syria*, £11.99.**

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WORLD SHOPPING: **MOROCCO**

A bazaar experience unwrapped

Melissa de Villiers opens three pages of Christmas shopping ideas with a visit to Marrakesh

STEPHEN MARKESON

Market forces: the souks of Marrakesh represent a slice of Moroccan life that has changed little since medieval times, a place for desert traders and mountain tribespeople to barter and buy

I probably sounded rather like the White Rabbit. With half a day left in Marrakesh's souks, I had just spent 20 minutes haggling over the price of my first purchase. No more than you'd expect for a carpet, perhaps — but this was, after all, only a packet of henna powder.

To the shopkeeper, my increasingly agitated mutterings about being late for an important date (my plane) were merely an opening gambit. Time to respond in kind. "We drink mint tea! With sugar, or without?" he cried. It was a salutary lesson that the souks are no place for a spot of last-minute shopping. You need cash, a large suitcase, a sense of humour and plenty of time.

Marrakesh has been a market town for more than 900 years, a place for mountain tribesmen and desert traders to congregate, barter, and buy. The quality of the handicrafts here (especially leatherwork and marquetry) is excellent; it's also a good place to find antiques, carpets, and jewellery. More than that, the souks represent a slice of life that has changed little since medieval times.

Getting Oriented: The way in is through the Djemaa el Fna, a sprawling, chaotic square at the heart of the medina (the old town). A traditional meeting point for street entertainers — from snake-charmers to musicians and story-tellers — it is always jammed with people, and at its most atmospheric at night.

The souks lie immediately to the north; a tortuous web of alleys roofed with an iron trellis through which the sunlight filters, casting a dim light on men in hooded cloaks, housewives carrying trays to communal ovens, and ragged porters bent double under the weight of enormous sacks.

Busy Rue Souk Semarine, the main street, snakes down to the heart of the labyrinth. With each souk specialising in a particular trade, Semarine is the textiles market, stuffed with neat rolls of cloth. All is order and modernity, yet at Souk Larzal the tradesmen sit in tiny, hole-in-the-wall shops, able to reach their stock (piles of sheepskins) simply by extending a hand.

Rahba Kedima, one of the souks' rare open spaces, is dominated by traditional herbalists. Here Rue Semarine splits into two lanes — Souk el Attarin and Souk el Kebir — but before you leave, pay a visit to the carpet shops in the gloomy enclave on the square's north side — one of the best places in Marrakesh to buy Berber carpets.

You are now deep in the heart of the labyrinth. Souk el Attarin leads to a slipper alley, lined by small, brightly lit kiosks crammed with pointy-toed *babouches* (Moroccan slippers). Souk el Kebir delivers you to the Kissarias — a block of arcades whose chief stock is cheap copies of Western designer brands.

The alleys on either side are lined with workshops busy making soft leather slippers and bags (Souk Cherratin), furniture (Souk Chouari), and skeins of dyed wool (Souk aux Teinturiers).

The smell, always pleasantly spicy, changes abruptly with the nature of the merchandise. There's no break in the hubbub until the muezzin's wail rises up from hidden mosques, when the workers head off to pray.

The sound of hammering guides you to the ironsmith's quarter (Souk el Haddadine). With everyone engrossed in their own particular tasks — anything from a spiral staircase to an ornate window grille — tourists are tolerated here. Only in the shops geared towards the traditional trades are serious attempts made to interest and sell.

Avoiding the Hassle: Like all the most rewarding travellers' destinations, Marrakesh is hard work. Devoid (mercifully) of landmarks such as neon signs or advertising hoardings, the souks can seem confusing; steel yourself, too, for unrelenting pressure from a stream of would-be guides, eager to take you shopping "just to look", but equally anxious for commission on any purchases you make.

Arranging an introductory tour with a guide is a useful tactic. Your hotel will be able to arrange an official guide registered with the tourist board: reckon paying 150 dirham (£10) for a half day. Unofficial guides will find you. Students can be much more interesting company than a bored official guide.

How to haggle: The effort tradesmen put into their sales pitch is astonishing, and if you're serious about a deal, you must respond in kind. And while the rigmarole of bargaining can be wearisome, don't start haggling for something you have no intention of buying — there's no better way to cause bad feeling.

The golden rule is simply to pay what the item is worth to you — and start well below it (say, a third). If you're intent on making a big purchase, do your homework first. Visit traditional crafts museums, such as the Museum of Moroccan Art (housed in the beautiful Dar Si Said Palace) and check the classic designs in antique carpets and jewellery. For handicrafts, the state-run co-operative, Ensembles Artisanales (in Avenue Mohammed V), offers handicrafts at fixed prices which you can use as a guide.

Always ask for a detailed invoice if you want the souk trader to ship your goods home. As Morocco is not in the EU, you will have to pay duty on goods above £145.

TOP SHOPS

Amdjar Abdessiam, 23 Souk el Ghasoul (00 212 442 7706). A family-run business stocking fine furniture and wooden ornaments. Boxes of thuya wood (an indigenous wood) inlaid with mother-of-pearl, £25; walnut salad bowl, £13. Reasonable postage and packing costs, according to bulk.

Abou el Aibada Frères, 3-5 Souk el Haddadine, (00 212 443 1342) is a big, busy metalworkers' shop with a nice sideline in delicate ornaments. A small, hammered-steel fish with long, winsome engraved eye-lashes costs £5.

Near the entrance to Souk Cherratin, **El Fathi Alaoui**, 242 Chkairia, is packed with exotic trappings used in the Fantasia, the folklore displays performed by costumed horsemen, from superb saddles to enormous Saharan tents — a snip at £600.

Give It A Miss: It is illegal to import handicrafts made from an endangered species, so avoid buying anything made from tortoiseshell — most commonly used to make stringed musical instruments.

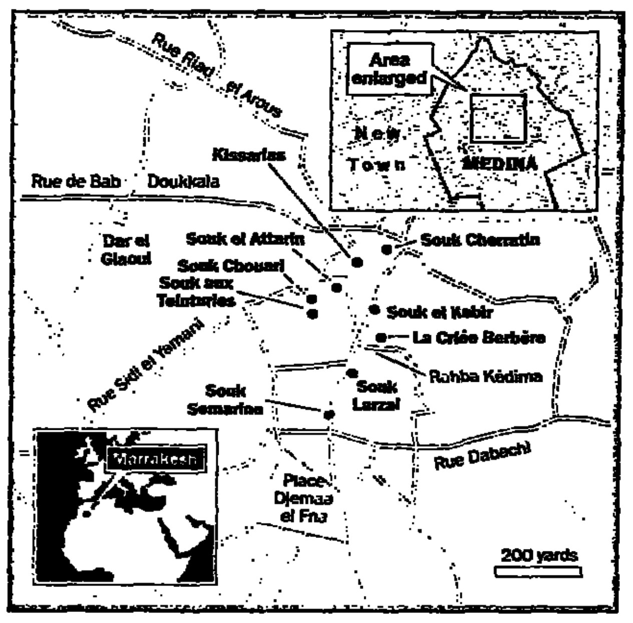
Shopping in the New Town: With its expensive boutiques and air-conditioned supermarket, Gueliz, the French-built, modern side of town, is a world away from the medieval mayhem of the souks. **L'Orientaliste**, 15, rue de la Liberté (00 212 443 4074) has good ceramics, silver jewellery, and crafts. At **Antiquities Zaina**, 44 Tarik Ibn Ziad (00 212 444 9790), a silver chest studded with lapis-lazuli, costs £800.

Catching your breath: The souks are surprisingly short of cafés and restaurants. Head for **Café Argana** on the north side of the Djemaa, where you can relax over a glass of fresh orange juice (80p) or a coffee (85p), and inspect your booty.

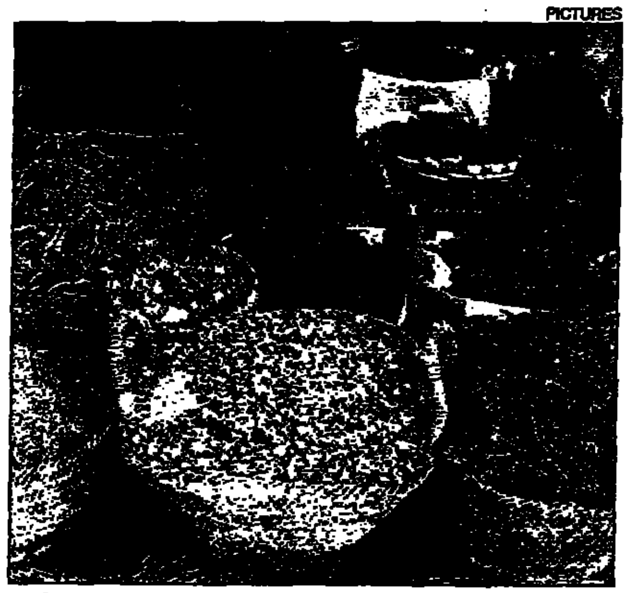
It's easy to forget the medina is also a residential quarter, with mosques and houses hidden behind elaborately decorated arches and high, padlocked gates. **Restaurant Yacout** (79, Sidi Ahmed Soussi) is a glimpse into this secret world. Set in an exquisite old palace, it serves classic Moroccan dishes, beautifully cooked (about £35 for two courses with wine; booking essential, ask at your hotel).

Lit by lanterns, the **Djemaa el Fna foodstalls**, which set up in the evenings, offer excellent value and variety. Guides often suggest that the food isn't very healthy, but as the cooking is all done before your eyes, standards of cleanliness are at least open to scrutiny. A plate of sizzling *brochettes* and salad costs about £2.

On the road to a bargain



PICTURES



On the scent: the rich smell of spices is ever present

FACT FILE

■ Melissa de Villiers travelled with Panorama Holidays (01273 206531), which offers seven and 14-day packages to Marrakesh from £329 per person. The price includes half-board or B&B accommodation in a choice of four- or five-star hotels, transfers, air passenger duty, and return flights from Heathrow. The company also offers a range of excursions, with half-day city tours at £15 per person; a traditional Moroccan dinner plus a folklore show is £27 per person.

Anyone wanting to travel before Christmas can fly on Tuesday (December 9) from Gatwick for seven nights and stay at either the El Andalous on half board for £329 per person, or at the Imperial Borj for £379 B&B. The price is based on two sharing and includes flights, transfers and taxes.

Goldenjoy Holidays (0171-794 9767) has switched its programme from Luxor, in Egypt, to Marrakesh and Agadir following the terrorist massacre. It has two trips leaving on December 19: a two-centre (Marrakesh and Agadir) holiday with seven nights' B&B at a three-star hotel costs from £399 including flights from Gatwick, transfers and taxes. A seven-night Marrakesh-based holiday at the four-star Safir Hotel costs from £449 for B&B.

■ When To Visit: Winter (November to March) is sunny and mild, with temperatures averaging about 68F (20C), although the nights are much cooler. Summers can be unbearably hot — up to 104F (38C) aggravated by the *chergui*, a fierce desert wind. During the lunar month of Ramadan (in 1997-8, it is the four weeks beginning December 31), there are fewer tourists and an especially festive atmosphere every sunset when fasting stops, although you may find service in hotels is slower.

■ What To Pack: Camera, money belt, sunglasses, a sweater for cool winter evenings. In the souks, keep a close eye on valuables — knapsacks are not a good idea. Away from the hotel pool, women should cover their shoulders and wear skirts and shorts which are at least knee-length — the more you cover, the less you'll be hassled.

■ When To Shop: The souks are at their most crowded in the early evenings, just before closing time at 7pm; in the summer, shops stay open as late as 10pm. A good time to go is between 4-5pm, when some stalls auction off goods to local traders — great fun to watch. Many shops close for lunch between noon and 2pm; some close on Fridays (the Muslim equivalent of the Sabbath), and almost all close on Sundays.

■ Reading: *Morocco: The Rough Guide* (Rough Guides, £9.99) is the pick of the guide books. First published in 1921, *Morocco That Was*, by former *Times* correspondent, Walter Harris (Eland, £8.99), is a funny, romantic account of the years leading up to the French protectorate; *Hideous Kinky* by Esther Freud (Penguin, £5.99), is a fictional tale of hippy travels through Morocco, seen through the eyes of a five-year-old.

■ Moroccan National Tourist Office: 0171 437 0073.

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Equities firm, gilts fall

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ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
565	407½	Allied Domecq†	553	+ 8½	4.4	14.2
626	365	Bulmer (HP)	413½		4.4	11.5
75½	40½	Burn Stewart	46½	- 2	9.1	16.2
1040	865	Glenmorangie A	950		1.8	22.8
638	425½	Grand Met	569½	+ 22½	3.3	18.3
639½	424	Guinness	572	+ 23	3.4	15.7
380	280	Highland Distil	307½		3.6	14.2
336	213	Matthew Clark	230½	- ½	13.0	6.9
109½	49½	Merrydown W	65½	- 2	5.9	..
2009½	1446½	SA Breweries†	1471¼	+ 3½	2.5	

BANKS

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
1521½	918½	ABN-AMRO	1240½	+ 37½	2.5	17.9
1050	710	Abbey Ntl	1010	+ 15	3.4	16.5
790	532½	Alliance & Leic	787	+ 14½	2.7	18.0
568	388½	Allied Irish	588	+ 4	3.0	16.7
516½	363½	Aus New Z	428½	+ 17	4.7	
4931½	2875	Bank America†	4716½	+ 46½		
585	291½	Bank Scotland	565	+ 13	2.0	15.4
1800	978½	Barclays	1546	+ 16	2.7	14.7
873½	517½	Bk of Ireland	873½	+ 6½	2.4	19.1
8999½	6008½	Citicorp	8343½	+ 450		
1758½	1358½	Commerzbk	1840½	+ 6½	2.8	
862½	403½	Dai Ichi Kan Y	443½	+ 3½	0.9	
4593½	2709½	Deutsche Bk	3931½	+ 59½	1.6	
1300	759½	Espirito Santo	1178½	+ 18½	3.1	
947½	249	Fuji Bank Y	308½	+ 18	1.3	60.2
2369½	1272½	HSBC	1685	+ 13	3.4	13.7
2258½	1226	HSBC HK	1615	+ 17	3.6	13.1
783	507	Halifax	734	+ 9	2.5	24.7
645	483½	Irish Perm	635	+ 15	2.4	17.6
860½	424	Lloyds TSB	780	+ 28	2.4	22.1
1008	689½	Nat Aust Bk	832½	+ 11½	4.7	
1012½	663½	Nat West	940	+ 14½	4.0	14.8
515½	449	Northern Rock	515½	+ 10½	2.2	20.3
790	508	Ryl Bk Scot	740	+ 20	3.7	14.2
1093½	502½	Stand Chart	758	+ 8	2.6	13.2
£164½	£164½	Wells Fargo	£184½		1.9	
405½	315½	Westpac	380½	+ 6	3.8	
373½	267½	Woolwich	309	- 3½	3.2	18.3

BREWERIES, PUBS & REST

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
829	695	Bass	821	+ 37½	3.8	18.3
68½	43½	Bit for the Bar	54		4.2	11.4
205	132½	Burtonwood Brw	151½		5.9	13.2
156½	121½	City Centre Rest	132		2.4	20.5
744½	575½	Compass Gp	708½	+ 6	1.6	26.0
305	250	Eldridge P 'A'	290		2.7	
266½	221	Enterprise Inns	248½	+ 2½	3.9	
485	412	Fuller Sm 'A'	437½		2.9	14.9
586	310	Greenalls Gp	425	+ 9½	4.7	10.6
770	610	Greene King	676	+ 19½	3.1	13.7
237½	152½	Grosvenor Inns	200	+ ½	4.0	20.8
293½	218½	Groupe Chez Gerl	281½		1.4	22.7
298½	213½	Hardy Hanson	219	+ 1	6.3	9.7
2850	2175	Holt J	2175		3.4	12.2
78	58½	Inn Business	58½		3.5	9.3
357	293	Mansfield†	297½		3.0	12.3
315½	252	Marston Thmp	270		3.7	9.4
615	480½	Morland	484		3.4	12.4
266½	210	Old Eng Pub†	266½		1.1	21.1
47½	18½	Paramount	20			
853	527½	PizzaExpress	820	- ½	0.5	47.4
437½	310	Ramsdens (H)	340	+ 2½	1.8	30.1
378½	262½	Regent Inns	332		1.2	26.8

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
680	530	Brammer	592½	+ 4	3.5	14.1
27	12½	Bridgend Gp†	13		1.9	59.4
119½	94½	Bull Fittings	95		5.9	7.6
360	300	Cattles	349	+ 1	4.7	7.9
225	162½	Car Group	192½	- 1	3.1	
172½	117½	Cavendish†	135	+ 1½	3.5	7.8
100	61½	Charles Sidney	87	...	4.5	12.4
99½	42	Cook (DC)	43½	..	6.9	5.8
121	90½	Dag Motors	98		10.1	6.4
134½	102½	Dawsons H	105½	+ 2	3.3	9.7
400	215	Diploma†	222½		8.1	9.0
502½	387½	Electrocomponent	460	+ 19	2.2	24.7
226½	117½	Eurodis Elec	144½	+ 1	4.4	28.2
105	76½	European Mtr	94	+ 2	7.8	7.3
300	213	Evans Halshaw	280		7.1	..
55½	39½	Fife Indmw	47½	+ 2	8.9	7.8
307½	275	Finelist Grp	330		2.9	14.6
34½	19½	Gardiner	21½		5.5	7.9
79½	57½	Glencheeon	65		3.0	10.6
110	82½	Gowrings	95½	+ ½	4.1	15.9
15½	11	HR Owen	13		7.0	6.8
103		Hamlet#	22½			2.1
374	284½	Headlam†	323½	- 1½	2.4	19.6
172	145	Holders Tech	152½	- 2½	5.3	12.5
240½	67½	ISA Intl	67½	- 7½	5.5	5.3
308½	200	Inchcape†	210½	...	5.8	13.9
72	49½	Jacks (Wm)	57½	...	5.4	7.4
343½	214½	Kwik-Fit	334½	...	2.2	18.3
460½	316½	Lex Service	445	+ 4½	4.6	13.4
122	97	Lookers	108½	...	9.1	7.8
9	5½	Middlesex	6	...	2.1	14.7
41½	10½	Midstatest	20		3.0	
472	180	Nortelin	281	- 4	4.0	11.2
224½	114½	Northamber†	224	- ½	1.4	15.6
352½	285½	Partco	306½	- 2½	3.3	16.3
304½	254½	Pendragon	282½	...	4.5	12.4
223½	172½	Perry Gp	180½	...	6.4	8.0
751	403½	Premier Farnell	418½	+ 1½	3.7	15.5
144½	116	Quicks Group	122½	...	7.7	6.1
357	265	REA	280		1.7	64.1
2½	1½	Reace	1½			50.2
29	9½	Ronson	12			
4	1½	Ross Gp	3½			
109½	78½	Ryland	103½		4.9	9.8
38	24	SEP Ind†	27½		7.0	12.8
82½	35	Salvo	30	- ½	5.0	
415½	209½	Time Products†	211	..	7.3	8.7
347	164½	Trust Motor Grp	166	..	8.6	7.2
408	228	UMECO	395	..	1.8	21.0
93½	58	United Dsds Gp	85½	..	0.6	19.0
352½	267½	Vardy (Reg)	274	- 2	3.4	13.1
685	498½	WF Elect	640	..	2.9	22.0
41	25½	Widstart	37½	+ ½	2.8	10.1
172½	111½	Wyko	148		2.5	16.4
158½	119½	Young (H)	156½	+ 4	3.8	

DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
492½	327½	Antofagasta	347½		1.9	17.8
329	232	Ascot Hldgs	254		2.6	11.1
917	532½	Broken Hill	572½	+ ½	3.6	15.4
289	175	BTR	182½	- 25½	6.0	6.3
624	462	BAT†	547	- 1	5.9	13.5
60½	41	Brierley Inv	43½	- ½	10.9	7.1
266	182	Cookson	212½	- 3½	4.7	13.4
240½	197½	Cosalt	230½		6.3	
415	255½	DCC†	380		2.6	14.2
330	243½	Gallaher	328	+ 3	7.3	10.2
140½	101½	Hanson Crdtt	123½	+ 6½	8.9	13.8
667½	338½	Hutch Whamp	434½	- 10½	2.7	26.5
438½	361	Imperial Tob	404½	+ 5½	6.9	9.6
522½	306½	Jardine Math	323	- 5½	4.7	12.8
158½	85½	Lonrho	89	- 1½	6.7	9.3
175½	141½	McLeod Russel	169		5.3	
482½	388½	Powell Duffryn	481½	+ 7	6.6	12.3

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
1333½	897	Siebe	1247	+ 21	1.2	22.1
227½	105½	Sir Hendrodt	117½		5.3	8.3
993½	708½	Smiths Indt	880	+ 30	2.5	20.7
767	547	Spirax-Sarco	547	- 2	3.2	14.2
303½	236½	Sterling Ind	246½		5.1	8.9
698½	450	TI	500	- 10	3.5	15.9
120½	88½	Tinsley (E)	102½	- 2	7.7	9.3
120½	92½	TransTec	97½	..	3.2	13.2
226	144½	Triplex Lloyd†	226	+ 10	4.0	15.3
378	251½	Ultra Elect	352½		2.3	20.6
77½	48½	Utd Inds	51		6.1	13.1
273½	168½	Vickers	243	+ 1	3.7	15.1
10½	6½	Villiers Grp	7½		...	...
712½	505	Vinct	643		2.4	12.2
952	742	Vosper Thornyt	827½	- 6½	4.0	12.8
350	213½	Wagon Ind	292½	+ 17½	5.3	12.7
304½	203½	Weir	271½	+ 5	3.8	13.2
250½	166½	Wellington Hdg	168½		6.0	9.8
38½	23	Weltman	37½	+ ½	6.2	11.8
71½	45½	Wescott	62½	- 1	2.4	17.9
825	525	Whatman	787½		2.2	23.1
65½	30½	Wickney	36½	..	12.0	..

ENGINEERING, VEHICLES

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
154	97	Adwest	150	.	5.6	12.2
197	156	Airflow Streaml	180	..	6.2	11.5
757	555	Avon Rubber	632½		3.7	...
344	227½	Bostrom	340	..	2.6	17.0
140	86	Britax†	127½	+ ½	3.4	16.7
339½	236½	Dennis	313½		3.7	14.3
315½	219½	First Tech†	306½	...	1.5	24.1
1480	907	GKN	1352	- 10	2.3	
4366½	3237½	General Mtr†	3784½	+ 90½	3.2	
583½	357	Henlys	408½		4.7	9.8
2823½	1540½	Honda Motor	2212½	+ 72½	0.4	
502	312½	Laird†	482	+ 10½	3.1	...
245	180	LucasVarity†	188½	- 2½	2.6	14.6
206	131	Mayflower	176½	- ½	1.7	25.0
172½	107½	Syltone	118½	+ 2½	7.0	9.6
257½	133	T & N	251	- 1	4.6	
85½	18	Toad	20	.	.	

FOOD MANUFACTURERS

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
590	418	AB Food	555½	+ 1½	2.3	17.6
311½	250	Acatos & Hutch	286	..	4.6	24.0
48½	34	Albert Fisher†	38½	..	11.5	9.5
330	275	Banks (S C)	282½		5.1	10.1
450	322	Barr (AG)	395½	..	3.4	14.2
43	30	Bensons Crsp	34		4.1	8.6
402	244	Booker†	316	..	9.5	
230	83	CPL Aromas	98½		6.2	27.8
682	464	Cadbury-Schw	625	- 10½	3.2	16.9
336	250	Carrs Milling	281½	- 11	5.7	...

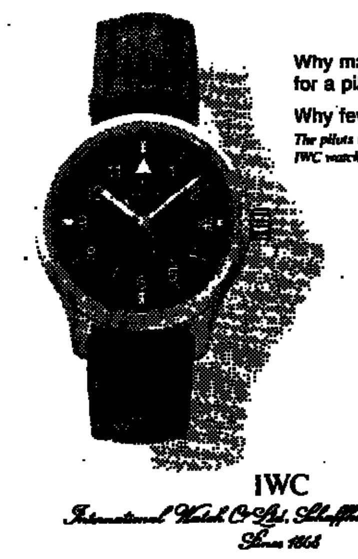
1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
512½	420½	Electra Inv	503½	+ 3	2.2	47.1
167½	143	Eng & Scot	159½	+ 1	2.4	41.4
422	307½	European Assel	372	+ 2	1.3	
113½	52	Fidelity Asian Val	69	+ 1		
293½	216½	Fidelity Euro Val	274½	+ 2	0.2	.
50	26	Fidelity Jap Val	28½	...		
138½	119½	Fidelity Spec Valt	136½		1.2	68.2
232½	205½	Finsbury 'A'	225		2.2	61.3
191½	146½	Finsbury Grwtht	187½	+ 3½	2.6	47.0
214	157½	Five Arr Chile	161½	+ 1½	1.5	..
31½	11½	Five Arr Wts	11½	- ½		
574½	375½	Fleming Amer	561	- ½	0.6	
82½	53	Fleming Asian	58	+ ½		
19½	7½	Fleming Asian Wts	10½	...		
106½	49½	Fleming Chinese	63½	+ ½	...	
49	13½	Fleming Ch Wts	23½	...		
408	280½	Fleming Claver	380½	+ 2½	2.1	51.0
507½	381	Fleming Contl	445½	+ 2½	1.1	..
158	103½	Fleming Em Mkts	113½	+ 2½	0.4	
276	227½	Fleming Ent	267½	+ 2	2.5	39.8
437	366	Fleming Fledg	381	+ 1	0.3	
98½	78	Fleming Inc Cap	97½	+ 1	7.3	14.5
110½	103	Fleming Ing Inc	109		11.1	11.0
258	117	Fleming Ing Cap	241½	+ 5		
63	42	Fleming Indian	42½			
22	5	Fleming In Wts	9½			
214½	128½	Fleming Japan	147½	+ 1½		
407½	335½	Fleming Merc	382½	+ 2½	2.9	34.8
114½	74	Fleming Nat Res	74½	+ ½	0.9	
409	321½	Fleming Overs	361½	+ 2½	1.6	79.0
160½	137½	Fleming Smlr Co	147		3.8	
185½	147½	Foreign & Col	171½	+ ½	1.7	59.0
106½	90½	F&C Inc Gwtht	103½	+ ½	4.3	28.8
130½	85	F&C Eng Mkts	98½	+ 1		
178½	123	F&C Enterprise	176½	+ 1½	1.7	59.2
384½	285½	F&C Eurotst	344½	+ 3	0.5	..
169	133½	F&C German	156	+ 1	0.5	
178	104	F&C Pacific	118	+ 2½	2.0	56.3
149½	131½	F&C PEP†	143		3.9	
185½	166½	F&C Smaller	174½	+ 1½	1.9	51.0
166½	122½	F&C US Smlr	152½	+ ½		
62½	52	Franklin Inc	60½	+ 1½	10.8	11.4
103½	60½	Franklin Cap	103½	+ 2		

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
4250	3150	Murray S/C Uts	4250	+ 100	3.6	
502	339½	Murray Smllt	363	+ 1½	2.1	46.7
415	386	Murray Vent	400½	+ ½	4.7	34.2
5½	5½	Newmarket	5½			
408½	353½	O'seas Inv Tstt	433	+ 2½	1.2	
261	158½	O'seas Wts	237½	+ 2½		
128	48½	Pacific Assets	55½	.	0.9	
87	65½	Perpetual Euro	78½	+ ½	0.7	
127½	98	Perp Inc Gtht	122½	+ 2	4.0	36.6
56	30	Perpetual Jap	30½	- ½		
386½	282½	Perpt UK Sm Co	324½	+ ½	3.7	29.0
£177½	£126½	Personal Assets	£165½	+ 50	1.6	
137½	113½	Prolific Inc	132½	+ ½	4.0	28.4
298½	228	RIT Cap Ptnr	279½	+ 1½	0.8	
569½	475½	Robeco	542½	+ 2½	2.0	
577½	497	Rolinco	549½	+ 2½	1.0	
108½	48½	Schrod Asia Pac	55½	+ 1	1.1	
98½	69	Schrod Eng Cot	66			
148½	117½	Schrod Inc Gwth	148½	+ ½	4.1	25.2
75½	46½	Schrod Jap Gwth	51½			
512½	133½	Schrod Korea	181	+ 2		
50½	19½	Schrod Split Cap	44	+ 1		
119½	102½	Schrod Split Inct	118½	+ ½	8.9	14.5
153½	142½	Schrod Split Zero	153½			
153½	126½	Schrod UK Gwth	141	+ 1	2.9	36.1
201½	146½	Schrod Vent Intl	158½	...	1.4	
341	273½	Scot	323	+ 4	2.5	
280½	169½	Scot American†	192½	+ 2½	3.5	38.5
311½	122½	Scot Asian	140	+ 1½		
128	98½	Scot Eastern	118½	+ ½	2.0	46.9
355½	275½	Scot Mtge	335½	+ 1½	2.0	47.9
102	93	Scot Nat Tstt	99½	+ ½	10.4	10.4
130	111½	Scot Value	118½	+ ½	2.1	24.6
2350	1960	Second Allnce	2197½	+ 20	1.8	41.1
125	95½	Secs Tst of Scott	114	+ 1	4.1	31.7
158½	133½	Shires Smllt	155½	+ 2	4.9	26.0
138½	121½	Smaller Cos	133	+ ½	3.1	39.9
385	344½	St Andrew Inv	353		3.4	36.8
495½	377½	Temple Bar	482	+ 3½	4.3	27.5
87½	72½	Throgmorton	85½	+ ½	3.4	40.7
169½	110½	Tipton Eng Mkt	122	+ 3½	1.1	71.3
191	133	TR Euro Growth	168		0.7	
45½	34½	TR Property	44½	+ ½	3.0	31.1

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
232½	187½	GGT Group	191½	.	4.0	
232½	167½	GWR Gp	174	..	2.0	32.7
392½	285½	[illegible] Group	345	- 2½	2.4	13.2
37½	24½	Goodhead	31½	+ 1½	1.8	16.3
345	254	HIT Entert	287½		0.2	42.7
287½	207½	Haynes Pub	265		5.0	11.8
22½	8½	Highbury Hse	9½	- ½		
230	180	Hodder H'line	206	..	4.1	14.1
285	231	Home Counts	240	..	3.0	29.3
415½	295	IBC	402	..	3.0	14.0
26½	18½	Incepta	30	- ½	..	12.0
407½	297½	Independent	342½		2.4	23.5
146	95	Interoope	129½		4.8	9.1
229½	172½	Johnston Press	210	+ ½	1.6	19.3
45	25	Lopex	31	..	3.4	8.3
327½	272½	Marden	304½	..	2.3	18.6
45½	38½	Mediakey	30	- 1	4.8	11.4
1265	950	Metal Bulletin	1020	...	2.6	29.1
217½	129½	Midland Ind	211		2.7	21.9
226½	182½	Mirror Gp	189		3.1	12.8
770	551½	More Grp	749	+ 1½	2.6	18.2
339½	259½	News Corp	334½	+ 7½	0.4	34.6
298½	218½	News Corp Prf	298½	+ 4	1.0	
384	225	Newsquest	269	+ 2½	2.8	16.2
47½	4½	On Demand Inf	6½			
37½	18½	Osprey Comms	17½	..		24.2
850	665	Pearson	836½	+ 2½	2.8	58.1
83	29½	Phonelink	33			
862½	750	Portsmth Sundt	860	..	2.2	17.6
258½	101½	Quarto	101½	.	9.9	4.6
648	506½	Reed Intl	618½	- 1½	2.8	21.9
781	556½	Reuters	731½	+ 21½	2.1	24.3
710	542½	Scot Med	692	...	3.6	17.4
413½	336	Scott Radio	382	..	3.3	
62½	38½	Shandwick	40½	.	4.4	7.2
28	10	Sleepy Kids	16½	.	0.6	
521	390	Southnews†	440	+ 2½	2.4	15.1
30½	14½	Sterling Pub	18			4.3
81	46½	Taylor Nelsont	80½	+ ½	1.6	27.6
220	173	Television Cp	205½	+ 1½	2.0	15.3
1622½	1168½	Thomson Corp	1609½	+ 14½	2.8	33.8
507	418½	Trinity Intl	473½	+ 1	3.2	16.4
267	132½	Ulster TV	241½	.	2.8	24.0
810	625	United News	785	+ 1½	4.0	

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
47	29½	INVESCO Tokyo	39½	...	...	...
165½	94½	JF Fledg Jap	95½	- ½		
120½	82½	J Fry Euro U	120½	+ 2½	5.8	26.2
72	42	J Fry Util†	68	+ 2	7.6	16.0
79½	68½	J Fry Util Inc	79½			
117½	92½	Jupiter Ex Inct	116	+ ½	8.5	14.7
16½	3½	Jupiter Ex IncW	12½			
91	76½	Jupiter Gbl Capt	90	+ 1	11.2	11.1
42½	31	Jupiter Gbl Ptd	42½			
139½	120½	Jupiter Intl Grw	137	+ 2	3.6	...
399½	293	Klnwt Chrl	359	+ 4½	2.1	53.5
118½	84½	Klnwt E Mkt	90	...	...	
174	153½	Klnwt End	170	+ ½	...	
112½	74	Klnwt H Inct	105½	+ ½	12.8	10.7
360½	261	Klnwt O'seas	340½	- ½	1.5	65.0
188½	161½	Klnwt Smlr	176½	.	2.5	47.2
397	102½	Korea—Euro	104	+ 1	1.2	47.9
173½	98½	Latin American	133½	+ 2½		
1138	902½	Law Debenture	1071½	+ 17	3.2	32.5
122	103½	Lon Ott Opp	117			
133	109½	Lloyds Sm Cap	127	+ 2		
25½	16½	Lloyds Sm Div	18½	.	28.1	4.6
158½	128	Lloyds Sm Pkg	145½	+ ½	3.6	
179½	159½	Lon St Lawrence	172½		4.6	26.7
342	282½	Lowland†	342	+ 6½	4.2	29.3

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
1½	1	Millwall Hldgs	1½	...		
144½	94½	Newcastle Utd†	95½	.	2.1	13.9
378½	191½	Northern	375	+ 11½	2.0	28.2
180½	75½	Pham Leisure	78½	.	11.7	3.8
38	22½	Queensborough†	24	.	2.1	18.3
18½	10½	Queens Moat	12½	+ ½	.	9.5
458½	278	Rank Grp	350	+ 4½	6.2	21.7
57½	40½	Ryan Hotels IE	51½	...	4.2	10.8
1600	1175	Savoy Hotel 'A'	1195		1.8	..
111½	39½	Sheffield United	51½	- 1	..	..
267½	184½	Sinclair (Wm)	223½	+ 6	4.9	11.8
153½	47	Southampton	77½		1.8	.
110½	94½	Stakis	98½	- 1½	3.2	14.8
320	235½	Stanley Leisure	256	+ 1	2.0	20.8
11	4½	Tandem	5			60.3
345	345	Tanjong	345		0.9	34.8
210	120½	Thistle Hotels	158		2.9	14.7
142	78½	Tottenham Hot	78½	.	1.6	10.7
132	94	Vardon	128½	- 3½	2.2	15.2
411	270½	Wembley	271½	- 1	1.4	63.6
133½	89½	Zetters Gp	129½	+ 1	10.6	7.9



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1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
99½	69½	Mercury World	81½	+ ½	2.3	51.6
14	0½	Mercury Wld Wts	0½			
765	603	Monks Inv Tst	702	+ 10	1.7	58.6
185½	156½	Morg Gren Inct	182½	+ 2½	4.7	25.6
79½	59½	Morg Wts	78	+ 2		
100½	68½	Morg Latin Amer	82	+ 1½	0.5	
40½	30½	Morg Wts	28½	+ ½		
130½	115½	Murray Ent	117½	..	3.4	
21½	12½	Murray Ent Wts	14½			
68	58½	Murray Eng Eco	62½	+ ½	1.1	
21½	6½	Murray Em Ec Wt	10			
449	364	Murray Income	434	+ 5	4.1	31.1
501	401½	Murray Intl	449½	+ 1½	3.8	30.8
205½	192½	Murray S/C DP	205½			
281½	163½	Murray S/C Cap	260	+ 1		
73½	57½	Murray S/C Inct	61½	..	24.4	4.9

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
580	447½	Capital Radiot	508	- 10	3.4	15.5
577½	444½	Carlton Comm	472	- 3	3.9	13.4
812½	512½	Chrysalis	571½	.	0.6	
95½	69	City of Lon	84½	.	8.7	10.7
140	97½	Cordiant	117½	.	1.1	19.4
174	134½	Creative Pub	137½	.	6.4	14.0
1968½	1431½	Daily Mail	1875		1.5	32.2
1888½	1331½	Daily Mail 'A'	1787½	+ 3½	1.5	30.7
216½	159½	Dialog	174½			
430	200	Dorling Kind	200	- 2½	2.8	33.1
908	715½	EMAP†	886½	- 3	1.9	20.9
705	440	EMI	473	- 2	3.5	64.9
1122½	841½	Elsevier	1014	- 7	2.5	23.4
1840	1400	Euromoney Pb	1627½	+ 5	4.0	17.6
49	37	Fitch	48	+ 1	1.6	11.9
803½	502½	Flextech	564½	+ 5½	...	

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
483½	299½	Lon Forfaiting	391½	+ 11	3.9	12.8
229½	184	London Pacific	184	- ½	9.5	5.5
111½	85½	Lon Scot Bk	108		3.6	18.5
236½	170½	Man ED & F†	232	+ 1½	5.9	9.3
1457½	1097½	M & G	1360	+ 15	3.7	21.8
1710	1172½	MAM†	1675	+ 2	3.5	26.6
205½	113½	Paragon	204		1.7	
2825	2156	Perpetual	2515	+ 25	3.1	16.7
741	500	Provident	741	+ 3½	3.0	23.6
400	303	Rathbone Bs	387½	+ ½	4.0	13.7
60½	39½	Rea Brothers	55		2.2	18.3
64½	48½	Rutland Tst	50	- ½	3.6	11.6
157½	87	SEC Group	88		7.5	
445	302	S & U	323		7.2	8.5
2045	1370	Schroders	1900	+ 10	1.4	19.6
1820	1225	Schroders N/V	1745	- 15	1.5	18.0

BRITISH FUNDS

SHORTS (under 5 years)

1997 High	Low	Stock	Price £	+/-	Int yld %	Grs red yld
116	113	Treas 4¾% 1998	116		3.98	6.59
103	100	Exch 9¾% 1998	100	-	9.73	7.20
101	100	Treas 7¼% 1998	100	...	7.25	7.31
110	102	Treas 14% 1998-01	102	-	13.60	7.34
114	106	Treas 15½% 1998	106	-	14.56	7.34
108	104	Exch 12% 1998	104	-	11.51	7.28
105	102	Treas 9½% 1999	102	-	9.29	7.26
111	106	Exch 12¼% 1999	106	-	11.54	7.21
108	104	Treas 10½% 1999	104	-	10.05	7.19
99	96	Treas 6% 1999	98	-	6.10	7.04
109	105	Conv 10¼% 1999	105	-	9.70	7.12
106	103	Conv 9% 2000	103	-	8.65	7.04
104	102	Treas 8% 2000	102	-	7.78	6.94
104	102	Treas 8½% 2000	102	-	8.27	7.06
119	113	Treas 13% 2000	113	-	11.43	7.09
112	99	Treas 10% 2001	108	-	9.22	6.99
101	98	Treas 7% 2001	100	-	6.97	6.87

MEDIUMS (5 to 15 years)

1997 High	Low	Stock	Price £	+/-	Int yld %	Grs red yld
102	97	Treas 7% 2002	100	-	6.94	6.99
122	109	Treas 9¾% 2002	111	-	8.75	6.65
107	102	Treas 8% 2003	105	-	7.56	6.73
117	111	Treas 10% 2003	115	-	8.68	6.74
116	112	Treas 11½% 2001-04	112	-	10.18	6.97
90	82	Fund 3½% 1999-04	89	-	3.93	5.49
118	109	Conv 9½% 2004	115	-	8.24	6.68
102	94	Treas 6¾% 2004	100	-	6.71	6.64
114	104	Treas 8½% 2005	111	-	7.62	6.62
122	110	Conv 9½% 2005	116	-	8.18	6.62
130	124	Treas 12½% 2003-05	127	-	9.78	6.75
108	98	Treas 7½% 2006	106	-	7.07	6.56
110	99	Treas 7¾% 2006	107	-	7.21	6.62
106	100	Treas 8% 2002-06	104	-	7.68	6.87
127	115	Treas 11¾% 2003-07	120	-	9.72	6.61
116	105	Treas 8½% 2007	113	-	7.50	6.60
107	96	Treas 7¼% 2007	105	-	6.89	6.52
121	108	Treas 9% 2008	119	-	7.54	6.49
114	101	Treas 8% 2009	112	-	7.14	6.52
99	86	Treas 6¼% 2010	97	-	6.42	6.55
124	109	Conv 9% 2011	121	-	7.39	6.55
125	109	Treas 9% 2012	122	-	7.34	6.56
93	80	Treas 5½% 2008-12	91	-	6.02	6.44
112	98	Treas 7¾% 2012-15	110	-	7.02	6.62

LONGS (over 15 years)

1997 High	Low	Stock	Price £	+/-	Int yld %	Grs red yld
116	100	Treas 8% 2013	114	-	7.02	6.55
118	101	Treas 8% 2015	115	-	6.91	6.49
126	103	Treas 8¾% 2017	124	-	7.03	6.52
121	101	Tr 8% 2021	118	- 1	6.75	6.45

UNDATED

1997 High	Low	Stock	Price £	+/-	Int yld %	Grs red yld
54	43	War Ln 3½%	53	-	6.64	
38	30	Treas 2½%	37	-	6.69	
59	48	Consols 4%	59	-	6.79	

INDEX-LINKED on projected inflation of:

1997 High	Low	Stock	Price £	+/-	5%	3%
193	184	Treas IL 2½% 2001	193	-	3.20	3.49
191	180	Treas IL 2½% 2003	190	-	3.17	3.37
123	117	Treas IL 4⅜% 2004	123	-	3.13	3.38
204	190	Treas IL 2% 2006	204	-	3.15	3.28
186	170	Treas IL 2½% 2009	185	-	3.11	3.21
194	178	Treas IL 2½% 2011	194	-	3.11	3.20
162	144	Treas IL 2½% 2013	161	-	3.10	3.18
175	153	Treas IL 2½% 2016	174	-	3.09	3.17
169	147	Treas IL 2½% 2020	168	-	3.11	3.17
142	122	Treas IL 2½% 2024	141	-	3.10	3.16
140	119	Treas IL 4⅛% 2030	139	-	3.09	3.15

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
635	522½	Securm Tel	615	½	4.3	13.4
162½	127½	Singer & Fried	143½	+ ½	4.3	11.3
47½	29½	Towry Law	47½	+ 2½	...	
4½	1½	Tnd Hldgs	4½			
106½	65	Union	80½			
54	20½	Versailles Grpt	46		1.2	27.7
997½	910	Wintrust	960	..	4.8	16.1

PHARMACEUTICALS

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
285	98	Brit Biotech	107½	- 11		
1115	610	Cantab Pharms	712½			
873	247½	Celltech	265	+ 2½		...
443½	235½	Chiroscience	253½			
293½	137½	Cortecs	189½	- 7		
1441	885½	Glaxo Well	1405	+ 21	2.9	28.9
245	133½	ML Laboratories	137½	+ 3½		25.5
330½	197	Medeva	202	- 1	2.9	37.8
403	228½	Peptide Thera	274		..	
202½	177½	Powderject	191½	+ 1		...
92	24½	Proteus Intl	39	+ ½		
84	58	Ransom (Wm)	74	+ 2	4.3	15.3
737½	262½	Scotia	422½		..	
287½	216	Shire Pharms	270	- 1½		
95	46	SkyePharma	49	- ½		
648½	384½	SmithKline†	634	+ 19	1.7	31.6
392	169	Therp Antl Inc	227½	- 2½		
707½	387½	Vanguard	425	...	...	
435	166½	Xenova	175			
2291	1585½	Zeneca	1965	+ 27	2.3	26.2

PRINTING & PAPER

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
142	86	AG Holdings†	87		9.0	11.3
782	677	API	590		2.4	17.9
74½	47½	App Holo	67½			
208	151	Arjo Wiggins	178	+ 1½	4.9	11.9
24	17½	Bath Press	21½		3.2	8.9
450½	389½	Bemrose	430½	+ 16	4.5	12.5
229½	130	Blagden	156	+ 3½	2.1	10.2
3490½	2178½	Bowater Inc	2606½	- 18½		
326½	248½	Bowmore Ind	253½		1.5	17.5
745	442	Br Polythene	449		5.2	10.6
24½	10½	Br Thornton	17½			
148	49	Britton Grp	138½		3.1	15.6
276½	188	Bunzl†	228½	- ½	3.2	14.1
239½	125	Capital Indst	135		5.4	11.1
388½	256½	Cropper (James)†	256½		2.3	9.2
673½	328	De La Rue	417½	+ 16	7.2	10.9
267½	195½	Dolphin Pack	257½	+ 2½	3.6	14.9
75½	35½	Fairway Group	37½		13.3	11.6

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
187½	167½	Partners	161½	+ 1		30.2
82½	67½	Partridge Fine	82		5.0	14.8
40½	26	OS Hldgs	28½			
337½	256½	Roseby's	314		3.5	16.6
142½	50½	Savo Group†	99½		8.9	7.5
96½	48½	Sears	48½	- ½	9.6	36.8
36½	29½	Signet Group	30			0.6
484½	333½	Smith WH	395½	+ 2½	4.9	
1220	910	Sotheby's†	1010		2.4	
305½	184	Storehouse†	344½	+ ½	4.3	12.1
150	77	Stylo	86½		6.7	
202½	152½	T & S Stores	190	+ 7	5.3	10.6
206½	135	Thorn	152	+ 1	11.2	8.2
203½	123½	Tie Rack	130	+ ½	3.2	13.0
340	205½	UNO	278	- 1	2.0	20.6
4	2½	Upton & South	3½			17.6
543½	324½	Vendome	471½	+ 3	2.8	17.5
26	3½	WEW Group	4½			3.5
417½	132½	Wickes	236			4.6
313½	232½	Wyevale	273½	..	3.0	18.2

SUPPORT SERVICES

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
535	386	AEA Tech	480	- 3	3.3	22.7
180½	142	Aggreko	164		2.7	23.0
114	72	Alpha Airpt	82	+ ½	8.1	7.8
56	34½	Alphameric	56			27.2
58	29½	Amlie Gp	41			
387½	254	Atkins WS	347½		2.5	21.5
188½	112½	BNB Res	155½		6.1	8.2
502½	394½	BPP	490	- 2½	3.6	19.3
204	95	BSM	190½		5.0	19.4
797½	416	BTG	893	+ 13	0.2	
95½	89½	Brooks Service	81½		5.5	12.0
570	432	Business Post	570		2.5	24.3
1527½	840	CMG	1410	+ 5	0.5	45.8
363½	220½	CRT Grp	343		1.6	50.0
890	590	Card Gp	800		1.6	7.9
341	161½	Capita Group	326	+ 3½	0.7	60.2
9	6	Chamer	7½	+ 1	2.5	14.2
250	172½	Corp Services	213½	+ 6½	3.3	17.4
58½	26½	Coutts Cnsltg	36½		7.3	
346	217½	DCS Gp	250½	+ 11	0.8	20.4
790	417½	Danka Bs Sys	551½	+ ½	0.7	20.3
311	232½	Davis Service	310½		4.3	17.9
910	656	Delphi	657½		1.2	18.1
561½	290	Diagonal	561½	+ 24½	0.2	56.6
280½	170	Dudley Jenkins	256½		2.3	20.9
79½	37	EW Fact	62½		4.0	10.8
100	49	El Data Prc	62½	+ 7	4.4	13.2
847½	470	FI Group	845	+ 15½	0.8	60.2
325	175	Harvey Nash	311½	- 2½	1.6	
785	515	Hays	781	- 4	1.5	31.4
313½	194½	Hogg Robinson	230½	+ 5	5.6	10.6
1030	530	JBA Hldgst	1015	+ 4	0.6	50.3
295	207	Johnson Clean	214		7.0	8.5

ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
159½	84½	Abacus Recruit	157½	- 2	1.2	19.2
217	170	Cala Invst	208		1.8	15.8
282½	180	Dawson Hdgs	220	...	2.7	21.2
51½	27½	Facepages	27½	- 1		
98½	66	Megalomedia	66	- 2	0.4	31.3
65	22½	Memory Corp	31			
580	290	Prism Rail	391	+ 1	1.6	...
1265	732½	Ramco Eng	862½	+ 62½	0.1	.
783	619½	Southern News	736½	...	3.4	
80½	65½	Southern Vectis	80½	.	3.3	16.7
60½	17½	Toxcadent	19½	.	.	

Source: FT Information

Price at suspension; † Ex dividend; ‡ Ex scrip; ▲ Ex rights issue; ▼ Ex all; § Ex capital distribution; * Figures or report awaited; .. No significant data. Companies in bold are constituents of the FTSE 100 index.

هكذا من الأجل

WORLD SHOPPING: SEE IT THERE, BUY IT HERE

Gather gifts with a good conscience

STEVE J BENBOW

Selling batik fabrics on a Kenyan beach

AS EVERY true shopaholic knows, the world gets smaller to make shopping easier. But is your money benefiting small-scale producers — or making the fat cats fatter? Those who would like their Christmas shopping to benefit workers as well as loved ones should visit the Christmas Market at Global Partnership World Fair at London's Olympia next weekend, where more than 100 fair traders will be represented.

"This is by far the most colourful ethnic fair in the UK," said Benny Dembitzer, who started Global Partnership after visiting Ethiopia during the famine of 1980-81. Horrified by the lack of international intervention, Dembitzer set out to educate people about the responsibilities of globalisation: "From slavery to unfair trade, people need to know that it's all connected."

Dembitzer stresses that fair trade is vital to developing economies: "A Conran shop buyer visited a small stall at the fair a couple of years ago and ordered enough stock to support the co-operative in Peru for a year. Aid helps, but it's not enough. People need work."

FROM ALBANIAN silver to Zimbabwean copper, the Christmas market offers a range of products for discerning shoppers. Stands include Amaz (Afghan jewellery), Nepal Bazaar, Habibi (Ecuadorean goods) and Creative Crafts and Gifts (from Zimbabwe). More familiar names include The Body Shop, the publisher of *Rough Guides*, offering many of its books at a special discount, and Café Direct, offering its ethically produced and marketed coffee.

More than 120 voluntary operations will be represented, including Oxfam, VSO, the British Red Cross and Save the Children Fund. "Shopping has become a leisure activity. It's a powerful magnet," said Dembitzer. "We want to challenge people on different levels." And of course, to ensure the Christmas spirit is spread a little more evenly.

● *The Global Partnership World Fair is at Kensington Olympia 2 December 12-14; open 11am-8pm Friday and Saturday, 11am-6pm Sunday. Entrance £5, concs £2.50, children under six free. Family tickets (two adults and two children) £10. Further details: send an SAE to Global Partnership, PO Box 1001, London SE24 9NL.*

JOANNA HUNTER

PETER NICHOLLS

Far left: Mask in the likeness of Zeus, thrower of thunderbolts and god of the ancient Greeks. Made of resin, and finished in bronze, it is available from The Greek Shop in London (left). Above: main icon of St Christopher, £11.50, hand-made by monks. Other icons variously priced from £11.50 to £120

Continued from page 26

woven by the Qashgai costs about £1,960.

Liberty (see Africa)

Carpets, rugs, flat-weaves, saddle-bags; modern carpet from Qashgai tribe depicting Bruce Lee and the Dragon (210cm x 137cm), £790; Afshar Sofreh abstract design used as a traditional eating cloth (126cm x 115cm), £200.

JAPAN

Neal Street East (see Afghanistan)

Shoji lamps, from £36.50; paper lamps, £3.10-£19.50; teapot sets, £29.50-£49; old indigo textiles, £80-£200; cast-iron kettle, £69.95; cast-iron wind chimes £6.50.

PHILIPPINES

David & Charles Wainwright (see India)

Chunky Spanish-style old teak tables, £500-£1,200; old colonial recliners, £120-£390; porcelain knobs, £14; coat-hangers with porcelain tips, £18; basketware from Borneo.

Neal Street East (see Afghanistan)

Huge choice of baskets; peacock chair; bead curtains, from £13.45; shells, 30p-£9.50.

Sala (see Africa)

Accessories and furniture include Bubu fish traps, from £10.50; metal & rattan chairs, £145; metal four-poster bed, £800; wire mannequins, £175; moss & wire urn, £95; wood & chicken wire cabinet, £295.

VIETNAM

Graham & Green (see India)

Silk-lined jackets and trousers; silver lacquerware trays, £61.95, platters and bowls; red velvet quilts, £275; bamboo plates, £59.95.

The Holding Company, 243-5 King's Road, London SW3 (0171-352 1600)

Rattan baskets, from £12.95; rattan trunk, £50; lined rattan organisers, from £9.95; lined laundry basket, £29.95.

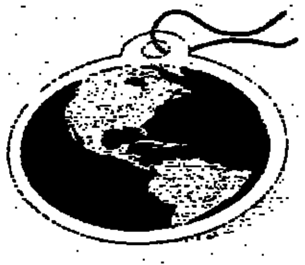
Joss Graham (see India)

Traditional stoneware pots, £15-£195. Large collection of lacquerware.

NEW ZEALAND

Kiwifruits, 6-7 Royal Opera Arcade, Pall Mall, London SW1 (0171-930 4587)

All Blacks souvenirs including UK Tour T-shirt, £12.95, scarf, £11.95; training jersey, £59.95; shorts, £23; Haka tea towel, £3.95; NZ flag tea towel, £3.95. Rugby videos, £35.



The Americas

YOU will not have to go far to find your rainsticks and Andean woolly hats, or Mayan jewellery and glittering kitsch from Mexico, or even such design classics from the United States as Frank Lloyd Wright building blocks and cool Shaker furniture.

NORTH AMERICA

American Retro, 35 Old Compton Street, London W1 (0171-734 3477)

Fifties accessories from New Jersey include flick comb, £16. Also Water Drapes (shower curtains with bold designs); melamine tableware.

The Holding Company (see Vietnam)

Modern American designs include chrome racks and stacking units; acrylic jewellery chests, £50; plastic swing-bins, £15; in-drawer organisers; over-door organisers.

The Home, Salt's Mill, Victoria Road, Saltaire, Bradford BD18 3LB (01274 530770)

Kit-form windmill, £24.95; American Chinese food boxes, 50p and 75p; Andy Warhol mugs, £10.95; wooden blocks forming Frank Lloyd Wright buildings £59.95; oversized American glass beer mugs, £2.95; beer pitcher, £9.95.

Jerry's Home Store, 163 Fulham Road, London SW3 (0171-581 0909); 57-61 Heath Street, London NW3 (0171-794 8622); Bentall Centre, Kingston (0181-549 5393)

All-American classics include mail boxes, Kitchen Aid food mixers, Waring blenders, diner furniture. Fishs Eddy's china diner-ware (eg dinner plate, £11.95); maple salad bowls, £45. Guldens mustard, £3.95; Vermont maple syrup, Jerry's pancake mix.

The Shaker Shop, 322 King's Road, London SW3 (0171-352 3918)

Folksy gifts include oval boxes, cushions, tin candle-holders, and simple, elegant furniture. Lavender-filled cushions, £8.95; heart-shaped wooden cutting boards, £41.95; oval cherry-wood boxes, from £22.95.

CENTRAL & SOUTH AMERICA

Tumi, 8-9 New Bond Street Place, Bath (01225 446025); 1-2 Little Clarendon Street, Oxford (01865 512307); 82 Park Street, Bristol (0117-929 0391); 23 Chalk Farm Road, London NW1 (0171-485 4152)

Non-profit-making publishing and education department promotes Latin American culture. Textiles, knitwear, jewellery, wood-carvings, pottery, musical instruments. Mexican wind-chimes, from £7.50; rainmakers, £7.95; recycled tin-framed mirrors, from £12.95; Andean pipes with CD, £12.95; Pottery, £3.95-£19.95.

MEXICO

Alternative East (see India)

Small jewellery selection includes beaded necklaces, from £3.50; Mayan necklaces from £12; flower pendants encased in glass, £12; Mayan chime balls, from £12. Hand-made woollen jumpers from £44.

Brocklehurst (see Indonesia)

Pine chests and boxes: small chest, £149; trunk/coffee table, £399; coffee table inlaid with ceramic tiles, £299. Brightly coloured tiles, around £30 for a box of 60.

Emma Bernhardt, 301 Portobello Road, London W10 (0181-960 2929)

Glittery Mexican kitsch includes Day of the Dead figures in sugar, plastic or paper, from £1; religious charms: wooden saint pictures; sequin earrings, £2.50; star/heart confetti, £2.50.

Mexique (see Indonesia)

Furniture and accessories include tin mirrors, £1.95-£98, and recycled glassware (eg wine goblet, £7.90); papier mâché parrots. Corona beer trays, £7.50; brightly painted nodding armadillos, £2.65; painted clay nativity sets, from £15.95. Wall decorations include tin hearts, £1.95.

Topaz, 10 Thames Street, Kingston (0181-547 3526); also at Unit 6c, Tunsgate Square, High Street, Guildford (01483 306063)

Big selection of furniture at Kingston shop. Three styles — rustic, wood with inlaid ceramics and painted. Rustic coffee tables, from £215; bedside table from £159. Kitchen tables with inlaid tiles, £385; coffee tables with tiles, £295; tiled mirrors, £109; painted trunk, £368.

Hand-painted nativity set from Mexico, available at Tumi in Bath

Europe

HERE is a selection of places that sell the best of this continent's offerings. You will find austere Finnish tableware, clever French things for cooks, icons from Mount Athos, paper from southern Italy, colourful glass from Poland.

FINLAND

The Home (see North America)

Alvar Aalto-designed furniture includes a classic stool, £49.95. His glassware includes tumblers, jugs, plates and bowls in clear, green or blue glass.

Suomico, 80 Hill Rise, Richmond, Surrey (0181-940 0059)

Chris and Ken Beard, who lived in Finland for five years, design and install saunas and sauna accessories such as brushes and essence. Marimekko knitwear, dresses and coats and handwoven Unica fabrics made into coats and bags. All-weather boots by Pertti Palmroth and rubber boots by Nokia, £45. Glassware includes vases, candleholders and stemware. Alvar Aalto vases, £24-£85.

FRANCE

The White House, 40-41 Conduit Street, London W1 (0171-629 3521)

Embroidered bed linen, Limoges china by Lafarge and Laure Japy, silver tableware by Roux Marquiand, china and cutlery by Edouard Rambaud, crystal glasses by Royales de Champagne.

GERMANY

The Home (see North America)

Beer glasses with designs by artists and architects, £10.95; Miniature building blocks, £15.95.

Italian notebooks at Papyrus, Bath, from £12.50

GREECE

The Greek Shop, 6 Newburgh Street, London W1 (0171-437 1197)

Stock includes icons painted by monks on Mount Athos, £11.50-£96; hand-painted tiles, £5.50 each; resin busts of gods, from £12-£135; woven tagaria (shepherds' lunch bags), £6.60; navy woollen fishermens' caps, £12.50.

ITALY

The Holding Company (see Vietnam)

Modern designs include chic desk accessories from £19.95; chrome stacking trollies; chrome pedal bins, £64.95; PVC folding shopping trollies, £16.95; aluminium/wood stacking wine rack, £15; aluminium CD rack, £25.

The Home (see North America)

Traditional china with writing (eg *burro* for the butter dish); parmesan knife, £2.95; almond glue in galvanised tin, £3.95; mermaid bookmarks, £4.95 for three.

Heal's, 234 King's Road, London SW3 (0171-349 8411)

Alessi accessories include Anna G corkscrew, £38.50; Philippe Starck lemon squeezer, £42; champagne stopper, £52; Parmesan cheese-grater, £22.95; garlic press, £27; pasta jars £11.50-£12.95.

Papyrus, 8 Upper Boro' Walls, Bath (01225-463418); 48 Fulham Road, London, SW3 (0171-584 8022)

Paper, cards and envelopes hand-made from pure cotton rag. Ten sheets/five envelopes in folder, £8.15. Hand-sewn journals and photo albums with antiqued leather and marbled paper, from £36.

POLAND

Oliver Bonas (see India)

Glass made in the Krosno factory, southern Poland includes penguin-shaped pitcher, £39; Blue Host ashtray, £29; turquoise Pamloma bowls, £14; green Latvia vase, £12; clear ship's decanter, £32.

SCANDINAVIA

The Holding Company (see Vietnam)

Danish home/office furniture; storage boxes from Sweden, from £4.50, and colourful bins, £28; dog-bone CD racks, £5.95.

World

MAYBE one continent is too small to express the breadth of your vision. So here is selection of emporiums and exhibitions that have the entire world as their oyster: from the snowy wastes of the Himalayas to the tropical heat of Laos, an embroidered waistcoat from Romania, Navajo silver, Nigerian indigo, rare paper, rarer kilims ... the sun never sets on Santa's grotto.

Gordon Reece Galleries, at Finkle St and Kirkgate, Knaresborough, North Yorkshire (01423 866219); London gallery at 16 Clifford Street, W1 (0171-439 0007)

Finkle Street gallery offers a huge choice of old or antique kilims from Turkey, Afghanistan, Arabia and abstract Gabbeh rugs from south-west Iran. Kilims from £290 (3ft x 2ft) up to £2,500. Kirkgate gallery has ceramics dating from 2,500BC onwards plus African, Oceanic and Asian tribal art. Current show, Gold Frankincense & Myrrh, runs until December 24.

Indish, 13 Broadway Parade, Crouch End, London N8 (0181-340 1144)

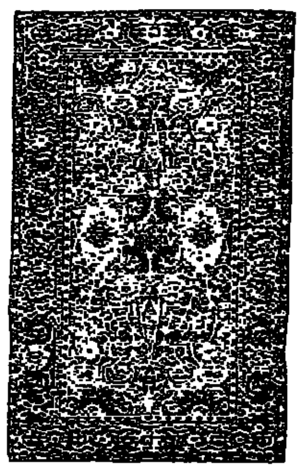
Vietnamese lacquerware, £6.99-£39.99; sisal baskets from Kenya, from £3.99; Andalucian rugs, from £99; Italian aluminium tins, from £6.99; Turkish kilims from £140; silk cushion covers from West Bengal and India, from £24.99.

Molly Hogg Textiles at Josephine Ryan Antiques, 335 Lillie Road, London SW6 (0171-381 6003)

Kente and Ewe cloths (large checked colourful woven blankets), from Ghana £400; silk embroidered door curtains from Morocco, from £120; women's headshawls from Kutch, India, £230; Turkish embroidered wedding towels, from £30; embroidered sheepskin waistcoat from Romania, £90; Tibetan striped woven and tie-dyed blankets, £370; brightly-knitted 19th-century hats from Peru, £38; 19th-century soft cotton batik sarongs from Java, from £45.

Papyrus (see Italy)

Specialist papers range from £1.95 to £7 for 20cm x 30cm sheet. Stock includes plant fibre papers from banana, hemp & sedge from Kenya; cotton papers with petal and tea-leaf inclusions from India; tissues coloured with vegetable dyes from Nepal; fibrous coconut paper from Bali; original papyrus from Egypt; bark paper from Mexico; mulberry paper from Thailand; recycled plant fibre papers from Malawi; traditional decorative and rakasui papers from Japan.



Persian rug, from the Fairman Gallery, £6,000

Steve Wright Studio (see India)

Colourful kitsch with pink floor and purple walls forming a backdrop for a selection of inexpensive gifts including Mexican tin boxes containing a tin nativity set, £24.99, glass slippers with floating beads, £2.99, from Taiwan; recycled chunky green wine glasses, £8.99, from Mexico; cushion covers, £9.99 from India; ; Mexican beer trays, £7.50; Indian wedding veils, £22.

World, 27 Litchfield Street, London WC2 (0171-379 5588)

The name says it all: Lenin, Chairman Mao or Karl Marx Chinese cushions, £28; Siamese temple head-dresses, £110; Burmese scorpions set in resin keyrings, £6.50; hemp jackets, £90, trousers, £70; carved and gilded buddhas, £32; African postcards, 80p.

Alastair Hull, The Gallery, 18a High Street, Haddenham, Cambridgeshire (details 01353 740577), is holding a selling exhibition from December 6-23. Bazaar-wares include rare Tibetan prayer tables, £395; Himalayan wooden milk pots, from £60; carved churn handles, from £32; brass temple lamps from Kathmandu, from £75, clay animals, £36.50 and Buddha images from Eastern Nepal, from £4.50. Sumba and Sumatra textiles from £12.50; carved Batak medicine pots, £80. Socks, £4.25, hats, from £4, and gloves, £2.25, knitted by Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

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SKI WEEKEND: PARTY TIME

REX FEATURES

St Moritz lets go of the reins in February with the White Turf horse races. Cricket played on snow and a gourmet festival with French food guru Paul Bocuse and fine fare from Bangkok, Delhi and Osaka, take place the same week

Wild times in the mountains of madness

DOUG SAGER

FAMILIES plan their skiing holidays around half-term breaks. Hardcore skiers wait for breaking news of a big powder storm. And budget skiers pore over "white week" offers during the January "hole" period when the Alps are deserted, after New Year and before the February high season. But party skiers need no such contraints — they will go anywhere, anytime for that special occasion.

Some resorts, such as Mayrhofen in Austria, spend fortunes organising elaborate events on every street corner.

Other resorts, such as the exclusive St Moritz in Switzerland, have century-old traditions such as the Cresta Run toboggan races. And in some resorts, such as Verbier in Switzerland, the parties have evolved without the tourist office having spent a centime, or having a clue how to control them. Here is a short list of party possibilities to get you through the winter, including events where you do not even have to put skis to snow.

DECEMBER

Some resorts open a month earlier, but for traditionalists the skiing season does not begin until the first glass of champagne goes down at the Criterium de la Première Neige in Val d'Isère. The official occasion is four days of World Cup ski racing (December 11-14) for both men and women. But Brazilian dancers appearing at the event got more attention than the racing last season.

For more than 40 years, the Première Neige has been a scene where anyone who is anyone in the world of skiing has to be seen. Jean Claude Killy never misses a Première Neige, though he stipulates that the resort does not advertise his presence.

On Saturday evening, downhill racers in cowboy outfits will ride into town in Western costume on horses. Racers may then go to bed early and alone. Everyone else will be in Dick's Tea-Bar getting acquainted.

● *Val d'Isère tourist office: 0033 47906 0660.*

ITALY'S top-rated resort goes to the dogs. Moonboots, mirror sunglasses and fur coats have never gone out of fashion in Madonna di Campiglio. Expect all to be out in force when Madonna plays host to Siberian huskies at the International Dog Sled Championships (December 20-21).

Madonna prides itself on having more international events than any other Italian resort. It also has the best DJs, from Rimini and London, and nights so wild that clueless tourists miss out by going to bed before they even get going.

● *Madonna tourist office: 0039 465 442000.*

A FRENCH Christmas, like a French kiss, is nothing if not animated. Avoriaz accords itself top honours for hosting the biggest and best Christmas party in France. A polyglot Father Christmas is set to slide into the snow-guaranteed resort with reindeer and sleigh, illuminated by a backdrop of fireworks to eclipse poor Rudolph's nose.

'Animateurs' in costumes and singing carols will circulate throughout Avoriaz, one of the best equipped resorts for families, from December 20-27. Huge fir trees decorated with lights and copious cups of free eggnog will ensure a warm glow.

● *Avoriaz tourist office: 0033 45074 0211.*

ENJOY a night to end it all, at the most raucous and rowdy open-air New Year's Eve celebrations in the Alps. Verbier's Place Centrale turns into party central, as more than 7,000 revellers brave the cold to spray champagne over each other as the band plays from an overlooking hotel terrace and Swiss TV viewers watch the live proceedings from the safety of their armchairs. For hours the skies explode with hundreds of fireworks in a spectacle unique in Switzerland. A handful of village policemen look on in a daze as foreign tourists, many of them British, shed all inhibitions.

● *Verbier tourist office: 0041 27 7753888.*

JANUARY

When you see a polar bear abseiling down the side of a building into a bar, you know there is a party going on. Skiing at the Austrian resort of Mayrhofen may be intermediate, but this is a town which knows how to rock. The Ice Bar is one of the wildest in the Alps. Last year the Four Tops were there.

This year, from January 8 to 17, it is the second "Party Week in Music City". Clowns, street musicians and snowboarders get together with, as yet, unannounced top acts for a Caribbean Pool Party at the huge indoor aqua-park and for more intimate sessions elsewhere.

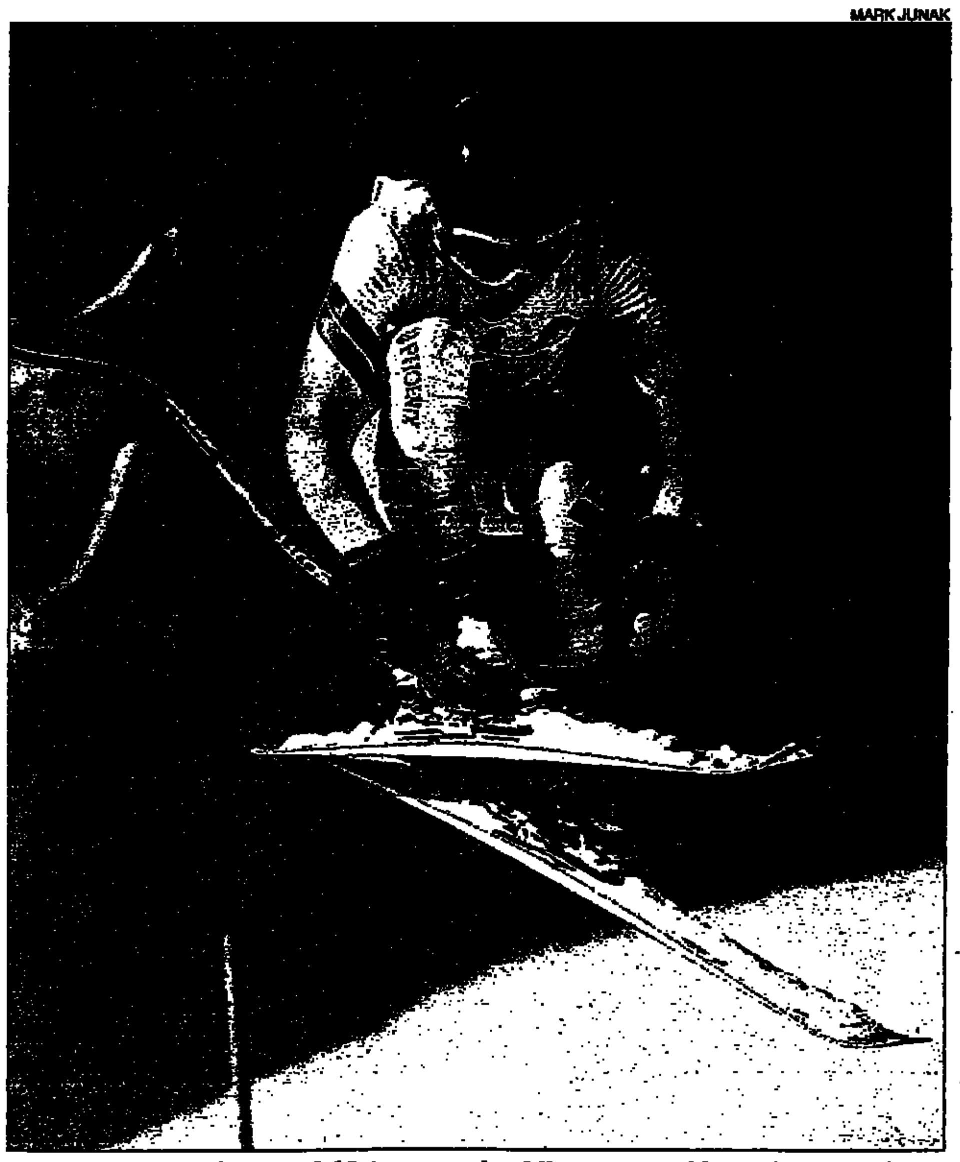
A major snowboard jump and style event is also scheduled for this week. Seven day B&B packages start at £143.

● *Reservations: 0043 5285 6721/2561.*

THIS is the one Aspen party where everybody comes out. Gay Ski Week (January 24-31) is looked forward to even by Aspen's cowboys. The ballroom of the Jerome Hotel gets a makeover, and the Aspen Ballet Company has scheduled two performances. The bars double their income.

● *Helpline: 001 970 925 9249.*

MARK JUNAK



The Première Neige in Val d'Isère starts the skiing season with World Cup racing

FEBRUARY

When is a three-hour business lunch a training event? When you are booked for the St Moritz Gourmet Festival. The fifth such *grande bouffe* takes place this season from January 30 to February 7, culminating in a "gourmet finale" feast set out under tents on the resort's frozen lake.

France's legendary Paul Bocuse will be chief cook, but more exotic offerings from Bangkok, Delhi and Osaka will also be on offer in the resort's hotels and mountain inns.

Other diversions during the same week in St Moritz include a spot of cricket (January 30-31) at the tenth annual Cricket Tournament on Snow, and the White Turf horse races (February 1) on the lake.

● *St Moritz tourist office: 0041 81 837 3333.*

HANNES Schneider founded the father of all ski schools, the Arlberg, in St Anton. Now, during Ski Club Arlberg Week (February 3-10), his descendants are planning the mother of all ski classes:

In a bid to make the *Guinness Book of Records*, the Arlberg Ski School will attempt to conduct more than 2,000 skiers in close order slalom down the Valluga, to be aired live on Austrian TV.

Fireworks and ice bars serving schnapps will entertain spectators, all no doubt waiting for the domino effect should one of the 2,000 skiers take a tumble.

● *St Anton tourist office: 0043 5446 22690.*

CARNIVAL or Mardi Gras is a time of craziness all over the Alps. But Kitzbühel's medieval facades are the perfect backdrop to parades of characters in funny costumes and devil suits.

The carnival tradition is an intensely urban one in Europe, and Kitzbühel's sophisticated nightspots cater for a wide range of tastes.

On the ski slopes, confetti is strewn and clowns wearing skis back to front career down the hills. In town, the main party days are February 23 and 24, with every bar and hotel throwing its own bash, to which no one is admitted without a masque.

● *Kitzbühel tourist office: 0043 5356 62155.*

MARCH

The best parties are snowboarder parties. And the most desperate snowboarders in the world congregate in the Val de Bagnes, near Verbier in Switzerland, for Europe's most dangerous competition. The no-holds-barred Xtreme Snowboard contest (March 18-24) pitches snowboarders straight down an almost unskiable mountain, the Bec des Rosses, where one snowboarder was killed last year. After the heat of competition competitors chill out in the Offshore café/bar, with its trademark pink VW surf Beetle, then go on to the Garage to dance the night away.

● *Val de Bagnes tourist office: 0041 27 7761682.*

COURCHEVEL, best known for its well groomed motorway pistes, is inviting budding supermodels to its Grain de Beauté (March 27-29). This is a beauty contest limited to working models, but ones not yet at their peak, with the aim of showing the "image of 1998".

● *Courchevel tourist office: 0033 47908 0029.*

APRIL

End-of-season parties roll on throughout the Alps, once tourists are gone and resorts are left only to chalet girls and ski bums. But the crowds thronging the narrow lanes of Zermatt at 3am are waving their glasses of acid white Fendant wine for another reason. Zermatt is the start of the Glacier Patrol race. More than 1,000 marathon skiers participate in this classic trek across the peaks and glaciers from Zermatt to Verbier, 4,000 metres of uphill climbing and 4,000 metres of downhill skiing. Spectators and well-wishers spend the night of April 30 in the Swiss Alpine Club Cabane Mont Fort, drinking to their favourites.

Then they hike up to Rosablanche on skis to watch the first race teams toiling up the cruel Col de Mourti. Blazing hot sunshine at more than 3,000 metres, cowbells and more cups of the acid white Fendant wine make for a final blast that should carry you over to next season.

● *Zermatt tourist office: 0041 279 670181.*

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CANADA Whistler, Banff, Lake Louise

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20-31 Dec	£299	£399	£459
3-21 Jan	£249	£299	£359

AUSTRIA St. Anton, Mayrhofen, Soll

Dates	Self Catering	B&B	Catered/HB
13,20 Dec	-	£199	£259
3 Jan	-	£219	£279
10, 17 Jan	-	£199	£259

FRANCE Courchevel, Meribel, Val d'Isere

Dates	Self Catering	B&B	Catered/HB
19, 20, 21 Dec	£199	£209	£269
10/11, 17/18 Jan	£179	£189	£249

ITALY Livigno, Cervinia, Dolomites, Sauze

Dates	Self Catering	B&B	Catered/HB
20,21 Dec	£159	£179	£239
3/4,10/11, 17/18 Jan	£169	£179	£239

NORWAY Hemsedal, Geilo

Dates	Self Catering	B&B	Catered/HB
21 Dec	-	£229	£289
4,11,18 Jan	-	£209	£269

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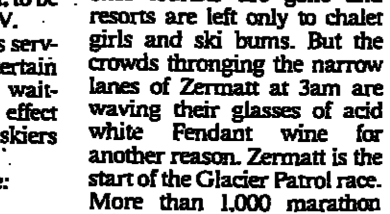
Verbier widens its horizons

THE SKI authorities in Verbier have added more resorts to their skipass after *The Times* revealed plans to reduce the size of its skipass region this season, *Doug Sager writes.*

Stung by its reported fall from first place among Swiss resorts to third in terms of the size of its skiing (*Verbier tumbles from the Summit*, November 8), Verbier has withdrawn its previous statistics and sent its *pisteurs* out for a recount. It has also added new resorts.

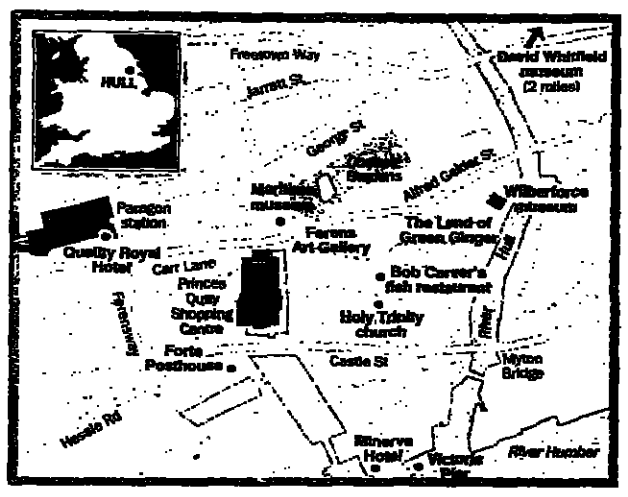
The lift company Téléverbier has now decided to reverse its plans to exclude Champex Lac from this year's Four Valleys skipass, and will add two more pocket-size resorts: Fouly and Vichères. More skiing will now be available at no price increase, although the 50km of skiing in the Thyon sector will still be cut from the Four Valleys skipass this winter, as previously reported. Using new parameters, Téléverbier has added ten kilometres to its previously published figure of 100km around Verbier. With the addition of Champex, Fouly and Vichères, and some "newly found" kilometres in the Nendaz sector, the Four Valleys now makes an official, revised claim to 360km of skiing and 85 ski lifts, down from last year's claim of 400km and 100 lifts.

It should be noted that Verbier counts 22km of skiing at Super St Bernard, some 45 minutes away on the Italian border, as part of its Four Valleys total, although this is only available for an extra SF23, up from SF14 last year.



Verbier: more regions added

Where the streets are paved with fish



In Hull, **Stephen McClarence** traces the steps of a bard and balladeer and finds relief in Edwardian splendour

HULL CITY COUNCIL

The Ferens Art Gallery: stylish and friendly, with a rotunda gallery almost casually packed with paintings by Wyndham Lewis, William Roberts and Paul Nash

The lace camisoles are a delight. The snag-resistant towelling bathrobes are, in their homely way, quite stunning. But the first Marks & Spencer ladies' lingerie department to be celebrated in verse is an odd place for a literary pilgrimage.

Mind you, Hull, at first glance, seems an odd place for a pilgrimage of any kind. Thanks partly to Philip Larkin — poet of provincial melancholy and the reason we're eyeballing camisoles in M&S — its name unavoidably suggests fog-bound glumness. Larkin, Hull University's librarian for 30 years, thought Hull "a place where only salesmen and relations come".

Not any more. Not if Hull can help it. The city — once England's leading seaport, now famed for its ferries to Europe — has launched an ambitious campaign to spruce up its image and attract visitors. There is everything to play for.

"Our research has told us that many people have no image at all of Hull," admits Jonathan Levy of CityVision, a private-public sector partnership with a whiff of civic evangelism about it.

"The news agenda tends to be fish, crime, John Prescott — he's MP for Hull East — and obscure things like the Docks Labour Scheme. There's little awareness of other things."

Other things like the regenerated marina, the shops, the museums and galleries — and, further down the whimsy list, award-winning public loos, the David Whitfield Museum and a Sea Shanty Festival featuring the Battle of Trafalgar recreated by two actors.

"We're quite a well-kept secret," says Pete Allen, Hull Council's head of tourism.

All the same, 90,000 visitors passed through the doors of the city's tourist information centre two years ago. A third were from abroad — mostly Holland, Belgium and Germany. And this year, says Allen, they're on course for 100,000.

Tourism in Hull? Sexy weekend breaks by the Humber Estuary? The image-spinners nod without an iota of irony. Come and see, they say.

The most scene-setting way to do so is on the train, along the top of the Humber. It gives a startling sense of Hull's remoteness, out on a limb of East Yorkshire, low and flat and on the way to nowhere except other countries.

On foggy days, first impressions aren't encouraging. The seagulls hunch on the estuary mud like strikers on a picket line. A grey horizon separates grey sea from grey sky. People button up warm.

But on a fine, crisp, winter's day, the sunlight can be dazzling and the sense of open space exhilarating. The light glints on the water and gives it a mother-of-pearl sheen. The skies are huge, the Humber Bridge looms like a mirage, gulls swoop and the only people you see for mile after mile are dog-walkers.

Hull's Paragon Station is very much the end of the line. Its great arching canopies swallow trains like a whale swallowing sailors.

The station, with a barber's booth offering face massage and dry shampoos, is the starting point for the Philip Larkin Trail. Hull has had other poets — Andrew Marvell and Stevie Smith were born here, Douglas Dunn and Andrew Motion have lived here — but only Larkin has his own trail.

> Between the Register Office and the Artificial Limb Unit is the David Whitfield Memorial Garden

It takes in a foot-slogging 44 places where he lived and worked. Stop No 9 is his favourite Chinese restaurant (New Hoi Sun; three-course lunch: £4.80; prawn cocktail £1 extra). Stop No 7: the White Hart pub, where he played his Pee Wee Russell records to the Hull Jazz Record Society.

The trail's author, Jean Hartley, a former college lecturer, was a friend of Larkin's for 30 years and, with her ex-husband George, his publisher in the 1950s. "At first he seemed very formal and formidable," she recalls. "His posh voice was very intimidating. But it was partly nervousness. When he went to railway stations as a young man, he used to write the name of the station he wanted to go to on a piece of paper and hand it to the booking clerk, rather than speak to him."

Later, in the 1960s, he was intrigued by the Marks & Spencer carrier bags his staff used to bring back to the library after lunch. He went to the store (Stop No 4) to investigate, rooted round the counters stacked with machine-embroidered nighties, and wrote ruefully about the Bri-Nylon baby-dolls and summer casuals in this "large cool store selling cheap clothes".

Near M&S — more upmarket these days — is the start of the Fish Pavement, a piece of civic art at its most imaginative. Flagship stuff, this. "We've packaged the Hull product around it," says Mr Allen from Tourism.

Three dozen carvings of fish once regularly caught in Hull's waters — turbot, whitebait, gurnard, lumpsucker, zander — are embedded in pavements and walls. They start with a shoal of bronze anchovies splaying out from the tourist information centre and lead a trail round the old town, the focus of the annual Sea Shanty Festival, held every September (if you have a beard, wear it).

The old town is a pleasant area with an air of bustling revival. Its marina bristles with boats called *Shenandoah*, *Dawn Bird* and *First Love*. Wine bars and restaurants line cobbled alleys. There are warehouses, trim colour-washed Georgian town houses, a street called The Land of Green Ginger, a Victorian arcade painted as pink-and-white as nougat... and the Edwardian public loos alongside Victoria Pier.

They are among Hull's unsung tourist attractions, little temples of sanitation, palaces of cream porcelain, and 1996 winners of the national Golden Loo Brush Awards.

The brass pipes are mirror-polished, the Art Nouveau scrollwork immaculately painted. The potted palms and hanging baskets of geraniums make them look more like conservatories than lavatories.

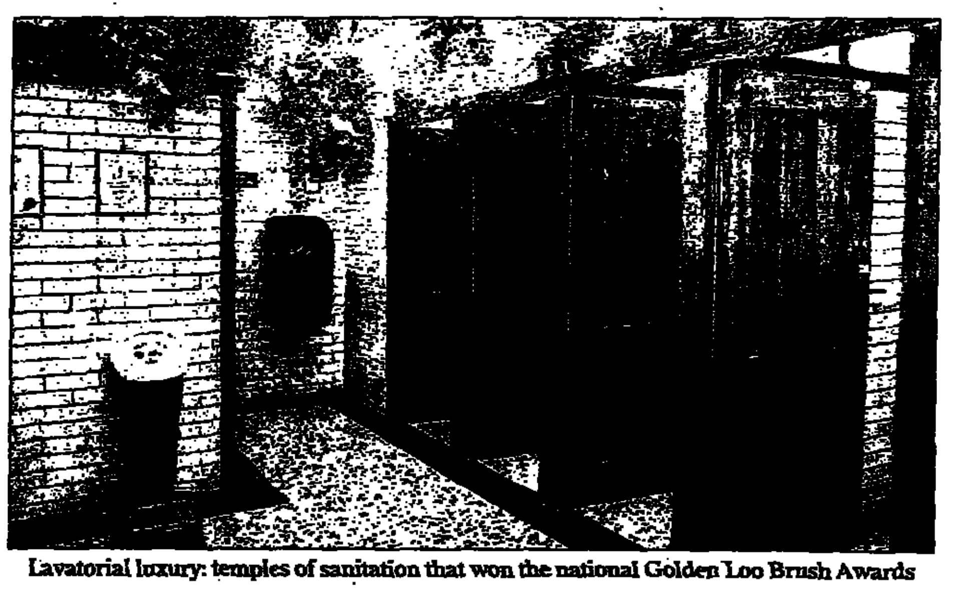
"People come from all over the world — Canada, America, Japan," says relief attendant John Harrison. "A few months ago, we had four coachloads of Guinness workers and their wives come to have a look."

Divine David: a museum, street, garden and maternity ward honour the 1950s crooner

More mainstream tourist attractions are just round the corner. Holy Trinity Church, the biggest parish church in England, is built on a cathedral-like scale. Seagulls circle its tower, whose chiming clock is one of 700 wound by Hull's Civic Clock Custodian. Downstairs, a stock clearance sale is offering prayer cards in Dutch at knockdown prices — 20p down to 10p.

Step outside, over the gravestone of Nathaniel Boddy, and turn right and left, noting the Fish Pavement mackerel, to the Ferens Art Gallery — stylish and friendly, with a rotunda gallery almost casually packed with paintings by Wyndham Lewis, William Roberts and Paul Nash.

Across the square is the Maritime Museum, with a whaling gallery dominated by the 40ft skeleton of a Southern Right Whale (it was called a "Right Whale", says a caption, because it was the right one to catch). The displays show the commercial versatility of whale parts, including a cribbage board made from a jawbone. Whale calls shriek around the gallery.



Lavatorial luxury: temples of sanitation that won the national Golden Loo Brush Awards

It's now late afternoon and choices must be made. The William Wilberforce Museum, dedicated to Hull's slave-abolishing son? Or the David Whitfield Museum, dedicated to the Hull-born Fifties crooner? No contest.

Whitfield (1926-80), famed for his hit single *Cara Mia*, is widely commemorated across the city. There's a David Whitfield Close, a David Whitfield Maternity Ward, a David Whitfield Memorial Garden — a pocket patch of pink roses next to the dual carriageway, between the Register Office and the Artificial Limb Unit.

But he's most spectacularly remembered at Bill Wilkins's bungalow. Bill is membership secretary of the DW Appreciation Society (240 members) and has built a museum in a garage extension around the back. It's a shrine to a singer Bill describes as "like Josef Locke — only better."

Scattered among 300 pinned-up photos are theatre bills ("Top billing at the Chiswick Empire over Morecambe and Wise"), car number plates (DW 100) and an unexpected range of Whitfield's bathroom accessories — lino floor, two wash basins (pink and grey), toothbrush holder. "Look, here's a fragment of his curtains," says Bill. "And we've had a star named after him — the David Whitfield Star."

He puts *Cara Mia* on the stereo and Whitfield's high tenor voice soars over the neat back gardens. It is a moment of pure Hull.

HULL FACT FILE

■ Hull has good rail links to Doncaster, which is on the London-Edinburgh main line. A saver return from Doncaster to Hull, valid for one month, costs £14.30; you must travel after 9.30am. Details: 0345 484950. By road, take the M62, then the A63.

■ Hotels: Forte Posthouse, Hull Marina (01482 225221) has rooms at £89 (single or double) room-only. Quality Royal Hotel, Ferensway (01482 325087) charges from £66.55 single, £80.25 double, room-only.

■ Food: Minerva Hotel, Nelson Street (01482 326909) has an excellent, wide-ranging menu every lunchtime and Mon-Thurs evenings. Good fish and chip lunches from Bob Carver's Fish Restaurant, Trinity House Lane (01482 226660).

■ Ferens Art Gallery & Maritime Museum (01482 613902): open Mon-Sat 10-5; Sun 1.30-4.30. Admission £1.

■ David Whitfield Museum, 122 Foredyke Avenue, Stoneferry, Hull. Admission free, but by appointment only. Ring 01482 831570.

■ Philip Larkin trail — in Philip Larkin's Hull and East Yorkshire by Jean Hartley (£3.95). Available post-free from the publishers, Hutton Press, 130 Canada Drive, Cherry Burton, Beverley, East Yorkshire (01964 550573).

■ Hull Tourist Information Centre, 1 Paragon Street, Hull (01482 223559).

Hit film's bare facts boost Sheffield

On the terraces: *The Full Monty* focused on scenes of urban decay

COME to Montyland. Gasp at the male strippers. Gawp at the red satin G-strings. Shout "Gerrem off!" and see if they do. And then hit the derelict steelworks trail.

It hasn't happened yet, but it could. *The Full Monty*, with its dancing dole queues and bleak urban decay, has had some unlikely tourist spin-offs for Sheffield.

Shot on location in the city, it's the most successful British film of all time. It has made Sheffield famous throughout the world for something other than steel (still made there) and world snooker (still played there). But not everyone is happy with all this attention. Some Sheffielders feel the film's grim setting is harming the city's image and handing Northern stereotypes to Southern audiences on a grubby, ketchup-stained plate.

"People always say what a horrible place Sheffield looks in the film," says Lee Illman, assistant manager at the Warner Village Cinema in the Meadowhall shopping complex two miles from the city centre. "People I talk to in the South say, 'I'm not coming up there. It looks disgusting. All that poverty'."

"I accept that *The Full Monty* makes Sheffield look grotty," says Jon Pyle, head of communications at Destination Sheffield, the city's tourism promotion bureau. "But that's not the most important thing."

The film, he says, has generated enormous tourist potential by a curiously roundabout route. "Journalists are asking 'Is Sheffield really as grotty as it looks?', so we invite them here and show them the exciting things that are happening." He takes them to the city's international-standard swimming pool and its Ski Village — on a hillside once dominated by terraced houses.

He shows them the developing National Centre for Popular Music, part of an ever-expanding youth-and-media culture. He points out that the Peak District — with some of England's most dramatic landscape — starts just five miles from the city centre.

"The film has got people talking about Sheffield to an extent that no amount of paid-for advertising could have done," he says. "It's been positive in a way that nobody could have predicted."

But has it proved a big boost to tourism? Coachloads of Japanese tourists en route from Stratford to York? Too early to say, says Jon Pyle — "but we're ready for the coach parties — even though I don't think we're going to set up Montyland, or a Full Monty trail."

A pity. Tourists could join the screaming women at one of the male strip shows run by Dave Bacon's agency Prime Cuts, so called "because the boys are best meat".

STEPHEN MCCLARENCE

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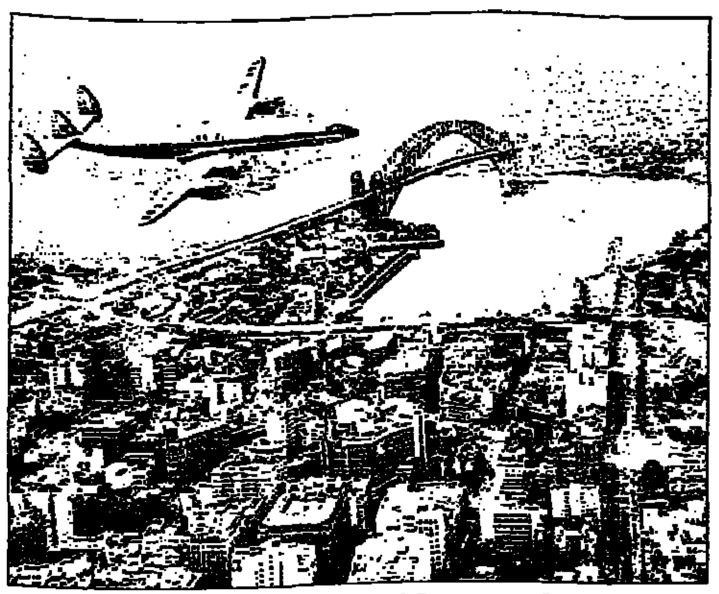
The first Qantas flight from Sydney to London, 50 years ago this week, took an exhausting 94 hours, reports **Steve Keenan**



The Constellation's take-off launched Qantas as a leading airline

Strewth, we've come a long way

THE 29 passengers who flew the first Qantas service from Sydney to London half a century ago would be able to make 12 return journeys for the 1997 equivalent of the price they paid in 1947.

While flying has indeed shrunk the world — the journey took four days back then — the cost of flying has also shrunk proportionately.

Those first Qantas passengers paid £525 to accompany 11 crew, 34,000 letters and one ton of food parcels (including 500 Christmas plum puddings) to postwar Britain. The country was suffering a dreadful winter, made worse by a chronic fuel shortage, and the food parcel gesture was typical of Australian regard for what many, in those days, saw as the mother country. The airfare, at a time when the average weekly wage in Australia was just £7, was equivalent to the cost of an average house Down Under. Given inflation during the past 50 years of more than 2,000 per cent, a 1947 return on the Kangaroo route would top £11,100 at today's prices.

The flights were so expensive because the Constellation aircraft cost about £500,000 to make. It was considerably slower than any of today's jets, so its overheads per passenger were high.

The price of a standard economy return with Qantas today is £849, while this week charter operator Austravel was offering rock-bottom returns to Australia of just £299.

The pioneering passengers landed in London aboard the new Qantas aircraft on December 5, 1947, after a 12,000-mile journey lasting 94 hours.

The marathon trip took in Sydney, Darwin, Singapore (overnight stop), Calcutta, Karachi (overnight), Cairo (overnight) and Tripoli. Air/ground links were via radio and Morse code, with three pilots, two flight engineers, a navigator and a radio officer on board. Three stewards — there were no stewardesses then — served a choice of fish, chicken or beef. Meals were frozen and shipped to airports en route.

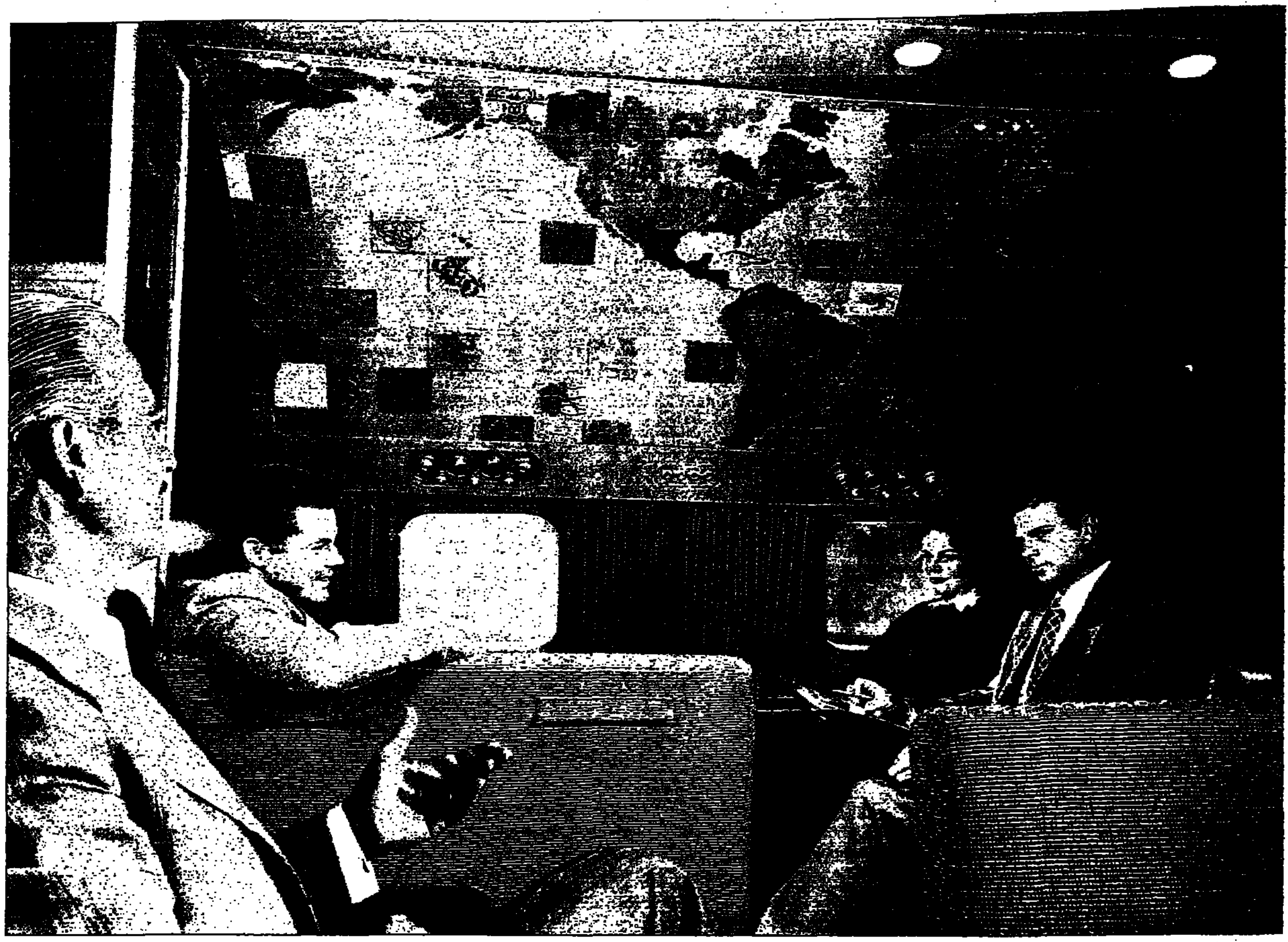
Qantas carried Australian wines from the start. But after one trip, Richard Casey, the Australian Minister for External Affairs, complained that there was no French cellar. One advanced feature of the Constellation was bunk beds — which Qantas plans to reintroduce on flights next year.

That flight marked the postwar beginnings of Qantas as a leading airline. Within a few years it became one of the ten biggest air carriers in the world.

Today's 747-400 aircraft, carrying 400 passengers, can fly non-stop in 20 hours, although commercial services stop over in the Far East, adding three hours to the journey time. If a Constellation and a 747-400 left Sydney at the same time, the 747 would be landing in London as the Constellation reached Bangkok.

The departure of the Constellation on December 1, 1947, was the first all-Qantas service to Britain after the airline's partnership with Imperial Airways, a forerunner of British Airways, dissolved.

Ironically, Qantas and BA are now partners again, flying 30 services a week between Britain and Australia.



Passengers aboard the maiden flight paid £525 each, equivalent to the cost of a house; they shared the plane with 500 Christmas puddings to sustain postwar Britain

The Christmas escape

The Caribbean looks very tempting, says Steve Keenan

HOLIDAYMAKERS wanting to get away from the pressures of Christmas are clamouring to spend a week or two on Caribbean beaches. The growth in charter flights to Cuba and the Dominican Republic has fuelled demand for a more exotic Christmas than the traditional resorts in the Canary Islands.

Two High Street travel agents, Going Places and Lunn Poly, this week identified the Caribbean as the place to be this Christmas, with Going Places reporting sales third only to the Canaries and mainland Spain.

And independent agents are reporting similar demand. Andy Szepietwoski, manager of central London agency Avant-Garde Travel, said: "Cuba and the Dominican Republic have taken off. People are being more adventurous and their budgets have increased. The Caribbean is good value and they are choosing to fly further rather than spend £600 for a last-minute Christmas break to Tenerife." More than 3.5 million people took a winter sun or skiing holiday last year, up from three million in 1995/96. And sales this winter are running at a further 18 per cent increase, according to Thomas Cook, precipitating a new record.

The Caribbean ranks fifth with Thomas Cook. And sales to its biggest rivals, the Canaries, Spain, Florida and France, are up by 19 per cent or more.

People pay an average £440 to escape the winter blues in Britain, with Spain accounting for half the market. But the biggest jump in demand is in holidays to the Caribbean and Florida, which reflects Britons' flourishing taste for exotic winter getaways.

The Dominican Republic now accounts for half of the total market for all-inclusive holidays. Cuba, Barbados, Jamaica and St Lucia are the next most popular destinations in the Caribbean.

Mexico has also doubled its numbers, with Hong Kong, Vietnam and India — the resort of Goa in particular — all showing sharp increases. The number of Britons flying to Australia has also increased by 10 per cent to 380,000 in the last year. "The difference in price between a reasonable hotel in the Canaries and one in Goa is closing all the time," said Mike Beaumont, head of commercial activity at Thomas Cook.

● Customers flocking to the shops in January to buy summer holidays will see a new name on the high streets: Worldchoice. Some 800 agencies, including around 400 in the AT Mays chain, decided this week to adopt the name. Independent agencies will add "Worldchoice" to their existing name, and AT Mays branches will be known as Carlson Worldchoice, named after the group's American owners.

TOP TEN FOR **WINTER** SUN

Canary Islands
Mainland Spain
Caribbean
Florida
France
Balearic Islands
Portugal
Cyprus
North-west Africa
Italy

Source: Going Places

REX

Guaranteed sun and cheaper prices have boosted the Caribbean's popularity

PACK YOUR BAGS

☐ Heading for the Frisco Bay? British Airways Holidays (0990 224224) is offering a seven-night fly-drive from £349 per person. With departures every day this week until Friday from Heathrow to San Francisco, the price includes airport taxes and third-party liability car insurance.

☐ Catch up with Santa in Sweden. Travelscene (0181-427 4445) is offering three nights' B&B at one of Stockholm's six Scandic Hotels and a day trip to Santaworld, including a buffet and the "Waiting for Santa" show. Return flights from Heathrow, leaving on Thursday, transfers and taxes are also included in the price which starts at £595 for adults and £350 for under-12s.

☐ Feeling pale? Take advantage of Last Stop Holiday Shop's (0541 503400) Cyprus offers. Departing on Wednesday from Luton, seven nights' self-catering accommodation, allocated on arrival, costs from £99 per person, based on four sharing, including flights, tax and transfers, or £119 per person, based on two sharing, departing on Sunday from Manchester.

☐ If bracing country air appeals, head for Wood Hall (01937 587271) in Wetherby, West Yorkshire, where badger watching, fishing, hawking, shooting and guided walks are on offer. Dinner, bed and breakfast costs £85 per person per night, based on a minimum two-night stay; activities cost extra, and must be arranged in advance.

FLYING VISITS

Departures: Monday December 8 to Saturday December 13, 1997
Lowest available published fares for return travel.

Route	Promotional Fare	Flexible Fare
London – Amsterdam	from £58 easyJet (ex-Luton)	£199 Transavia (ex-Gatwick)
London – Berlin	£99mw/£129we AB Airlines (ex-Gatwick)	£398 AB Airlines (ex-Gatwick)
London – Copenhagen	from £108 Debonair (ex-Luton)	from £138 Debonair (ex-Luton)
London – Glasgow	from £58 easyJet (ex-Luton)	£198 BA (ex-Heathrow/Gatwick)
London – Munich	from £118 Debonair (ex-Luton)	from £138 Debonair (ex-Luton)
London – New York	£169mw/£199we BA (ex-Heathrow/Gatwick)	£844 BA (ex-Heathrow/Gatwick)
London – Orlando	£309mw/£399we BA (ex-Gatwick)	£992 BA (ex-Gatwick)
London – Paris	£98mw/£110we BA (ex-Heathrow/Gatwick)	£239 BA (ex-Heathrow/Gatwick)
London – Rome	from £148 Debonair (ex-Luton)	from £178 Debonair (ex-Luton)
Manchester – Shannon	£105 BA	£264 BA

Airline telephone numbers

AB Airlines 0345 464748
Transavia 01293 596650
British Airways (BA) 0345 222111
Debonair 0500 146200
easyJet 0990 292929

Notes
* mw-midweek; we-weekend.
* Prices shown in the left-hand column are the lowest published excursion fares. Prices shown in the right-hand column are the lowest available flexible fares which do not require a Saturday night stay and which, in many cases, allow changes or cancellation without penalty. In all cases you are advised to check the restrictions, if any, when booking.
* Availability is not guaranteed.
* Fares shown do not include any applicable taxes or security fees.

☐ Avoid the Christmas crowds and do your Christmas shopping in Istanbul. Treasures of Turkey (0171-494 2292) is offering three nights' B&B at the Hotel Hali, in the central Sultan Ahmet area, from £169 per person, including a half-day sightseeing tour, return flights, transfers and airport taxes, leaving on Tuesday from Gatwick. A four-night trip leaving Gatwick on Friday costs from £189 per person.

☐ See Gaudi's flamboyant work in Barcelona with Sovereign Cities (0990 768373). Two nights' B&B at the Hotel Cataluna, which is located just off the famous La Rambla, costs from £292 per person, including return flights and taxes but not transfers. Departures are every day this week from Gatwick, Heathrow, Birmingham, Bristol or Manchester.

JOANNA HUNTER

Choose your virtual holiday

CHILDREN versed in computers will soon be able to guide their parents around the first summer holiday brochure on CD, *writes Steve Keenan*.

Eurocamp is to launch its main camping and mobile home brochure on CD on December 22. Only Virgin Holidays' ski brochure has previously appeared in the same format. According to marketing director Mark Hammerton, nearly half of Eurocamp's 100,000 customers are families who own personal computers with CD facilities at home.

The brochure will allow home browsers to take virtual walks around a mobile home and view stills of the sites. Video clips will follow.

It also allows people to price their own holiday, combining the site price with variables such as ferry fares, stop-over hotels or Disneyland tickets. Theoretically, the CD could replace holiday brochures. With CDs costing roughly 30p eachto produce and brochures more than £1, tour operators as well as conservationists would be happy.

But in its fist year, Eurocamp is producing just 30,000 free CDs and 200,000 brochures (01565 626262).

Fruitful ferry crossing

A CARGO ferry carrying Christmas fruit and veg from Spain to British supermarkets will also be used to carry passengers this winter, *Steve Keenan writes*.

Brittany Ferries is offering space to 200 holidaymakers on the *Barfleur*, which will operate weekly between Poole and Santander until March. The ship replaces the *Val de Loire*.

Although the ferry will be taking 65 trucks of satsumas to the UK, holidaymakers will have en suite cabins, two restaurants, bar, cinema and duty-free shops. Fares start at £213 return for a car and two passengers.

The only change to ferry schedules this winter is the axing of the Ramsgate-Dunkirk route by Holyman Sally ferries. It now operates only the Ramsgate-Ostend route.

Protests have forced Brazil to shelve plans for a 400 per cent increase in departure tax

Time to back down in Rio

BRAZIL has been forced to reconsider a decision to increase its departure tax from £12 to £60 following complaints that it would amount to a tourist "rip-off". *Tom Chesshyre writes.*

The tax was due to take effect next month, but the Brazilian Tourist Office now says it is unlikely that foreign tourists will be charged. Brazilian nationals will, however, have to pay the tax.

Although a final decision has yet to be made, tour operators are claiming an important victory against a worldwide trend of rising departure taxes and visa prices. For example, Britain has recently doubled Air Passenger Duty to £10 on flights to European countries and £20 for long-haul destinations, and Kenya has just introduced a £35 visa fee.

"The Brazil tax increase represented a 400 per cent rise and would have clobbered tourists," said Brian Williams, director of Journey Latin America, which specialises in holidays to Brazil. "Taxes and visa charges have been increasing dramatically across the world over the past four years, so we are glad that it seems as though a country has finally seen sense."

This week the Brazilian Tourist Office — which has acted as a go-between for operators and the Government — admitted that the £60 charge would have been "totally outrageous".

A spokesman, who predicted that the increase could have reduced the number of foreign visitors by as much as 60 per cent, said: "We are trying to attract tourists, not put them off. The Government has now heard the arguments against the tax rise and all the indications are that it will not apply to tourists."

Tour operators hope that the U-turn will send a warning signal to other countries considering increasing tourist entry and departure charges.

The Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA), which represents both operators and agents, said: "It's important that we fight these increases. British tourists spend millions of pounds abroad each year, so we have a strong bargaining position."

The worldwide surge in visa and departure taxes is compounded by local hotel, sales and other taxes that can increase the cost of travel alarmingly.

Last month, Kenya introduced a stiff new charge: a £35 entry visa. The Kenyan High Commission argues that this was a fair response to Britain's decision last year to bring in a £33 visa for Kenyans visiting Britain.

COSTLY **VISAS**

Ethiopia - £44
Bangladesh - £40
Pakistan - £40
Vietnam - £40
Kenya - £35
Oman - £30
Jordan - £27
China - £25
India - £19
Egypt - £15

Source: Passport Service

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WORLD PICTURES

The statue of Christ on Mount Corcovado in Rio

هكذا من الأصل

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AROUND THE WORLD A WEEKEND GUIDE FOR SINGLES

JILL CRAWSHAW'S
TRAVEL TIPS

Go bananas at sea

CONVENTIONAL cruise companies have all but forgotten single travellers, for whom prices may not even be quoted in the brochures. Singles are fobbed off with phrases such as "prices are available on request". This should set the alarm bells ringing as most modern liners have only double cabins, with hefty charges for single occupancy.

Cargo-boat cruises, however, where passengers are the financial icing on the cake rather than the *raison d'être*, rarely carry such punitive extras; the passenger cargo ship journeys of Strand Voyages (0171-836 6363) carry no supplements at all: others levy only small extra charges.

For example, an exotic 110-day round-trip to the South Pacific from Dunkirk, with 18 ports of call, will cost each of the ten passengers £7,785.

And on the Fyffes banana boat run from Portsmouth to Suriname and Guyana, six passengers will pay £1,980 each for the 38-day round trip. The same trip, at the same price, is also available through Fyffes' agents, Cargo Ship Voyages (01473 736265).

Cargo ship cruise: travel the world on a banana boat

Lone rangers

WHEN it comes to tour operators, single travellers have to surf the brochures to find supplement-free departures — and even these are often hedged in with "limited availability" conditions or off-season dates.

Long-haul specialist Kuoni (brochure requestline: 07000 458664) states clearly that almost 70 of its hotels offer special deals for singles, although the number of single rooms is limited. At Ari Beach, the escapist "no shoes" island in the Maldives, singles pay no supplements from April 13 to November 1 (the rainy season starts in June and goes on until September). A half-board week including flights costs from £649, extra nights from £22.

Virgin Holidays (01293 562944) offers a small collection of hotels in Orlando, Miami and Key West, with prices from £449 which covers flights, car hire (excluding insurance and taxes), or transfers, and seven nights' hotel accommodation in Kissimmee.

Singles who fancy playing the Lone Ranger can also take a holiday on a dude ranch (riding but with other activities and entertainments), or on a working ranch with opportunities to help with branding, cattle round-ups and fence mending. The Spanish Springs Guest Ranch and the Jim Marr Working Ranch, both in California, cost from £1,350 for two weeks with flights and meals, but without car hire.

In its new programme Journeys of Discovery, Abercrombie & Kent (0171-730 9600) offers 13 escorted tours to Africa, Egypt, Syria, Jordan and India. Groups are limited to 18, with single places at no extra cost. If you book early enough, you should be able to bag a tent for yourself on the nine-night Classic Tented safari to Kenya, visiting Samburu, Mount Kenya and Masai Mara. Prices start at £1,898, including flights and most meals.

IF YOU have no one to travel with, Travel Companions will arrange introductions to prospective sharers. The service is for people aged 25 to 75 and costs £50. Send an SAE to: 110 High Mount, Station Road, London NW4 3ST (0181-202 8478).

ROBERT HARDING

Ride 'em cowboy: single travellers will not be lonely on a working ranch in the USA, with the chance to help with branding, cattle round-ups and fence mending

Single minded

"WE HAVE sexism, racism and goodness knows what other -isms — what about singleism?" asks Jean Jewell, who founded the Single Travellers Action Group (STAG) three years ago, having experienced the discriminatory treatment meted out to lone travellers after the death of her husband.

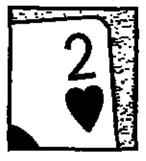
Now the group has 3,000 members who receive three newsletters a year with information on tour operators, hotels and organisations which give discounts or have special arrangements for singles. In co-operation with Saga Holidays, STAG also organises its own trips: a week's full-board in Playa de Palma in Majorca next April will cost £409 including flights and three excursions.

For more information, send an SAE to: Single Travellers Action Group, Church Lane, Sharnbrook, Bedford MK44 1HR.

NEAL'S YARD Agency for Personal Development (07000 783 704), although not exclusively for singles, does manage to attract a large number on its holistic holidays — and in order to avoid single supplements, guests are encouraged to share rooms. Nearly everyone arrives alone at Atsitsa, the Skyros Holidays Centre on the Greek island of that name, but the agency claims that the different activities — yoga, dance, creative writing and windsurfing — and the community atmosphere make it easy to find friends. Prices start at £495 for two weeks' full-board and six activities, excluding flights. The season runs from May to October.

At Huzur Vadisi in southwest Turkey, there are courses in massage, tai ji or yoga, or you can relax and do your own thing. The price of £325 includes a week's full board, course fees and shared accommodation in a yurt (a traditional-style nomadic hut) but no flights. Without the courses the cost is £265. Single occupancy of a yurt will cost an extra £50.

Card parties



THE over-50s specialist Saga (0800 300500) organises house-party type holidays for single people in the UK and abroad where hosts organise games, quizzes, dances and excursions for groups of 20 to 50 people. There are also a number of special interest breaks including bridge, computer courses, dancing, gardens, Scrabble and walking. There are no single room supplements.

Single holidaymakers who prefer to travel without the partying might prefer the less organised "singles-only departures". For example, on a tour to Romania, visiting the Carpathian Mountains and Count Dracula's castle, the weeks beginning April 18 and October 10 are reserved for single travellers. The cost is £449 and £459 respectively, for half-board and flights.

FROM long weekends in Britain and golfing holidays in Spain to tours of Papua New Guinea, Solo's Holidays is Britain's largest tour operator for single travellers (0181-951 2800). For 1998, the age groups have been altered to reflect changing attitudes. The 30-49 group in the brochure becomes 28-55, and 50-69 expands to 45-69. A week's half-board in Rhodes, for example, which costs from £399 in May, rising to £529 in August, carries no single supplement. A nine-day northern India tour in May costs £969 sharing, £1,119 if you want a room to yourself.

Time for action

LASTING Impressions (0161-499 3971) runs UK breaks "with a party spirit" for those aged 30 to 65 and charges no single supplements. Many of the breaks are themed around wine-tasting, sport, racing, jazz or rambling.

A two-night Grand National break in April costs £159 for half-board accommodation with wine, tickets for Aintree and evening entertainment. Acorn Activities (01432 830083) says that action, and lots of it, is the common denominator that bonds its singles groups of largely 35 to 45-year-olds. The firm offers a number of single holidays, all without supplements. Activity weeks based at Abergavenny in July and August include abseiling and climbing, mountain biking, pony-trekking and kayaking. They cost £495 for half-board hotel accommodation, instruction and picnic lunches.

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ACCOMODATION: The luxurious Jiminy Peak hotel is at the foot of the runs. Facilities include heated outdoor swimming pool, three restaurants, two bars, health spa and sauna.

SKI FACTS: Number of downhill runs: advanced 10; intermediate 7; beginners 13. Of these, 18 runs are open every evening for night skiing.

DEPARTURE DATES
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CHANGING TIMES

OVERSEAS TRAVEL

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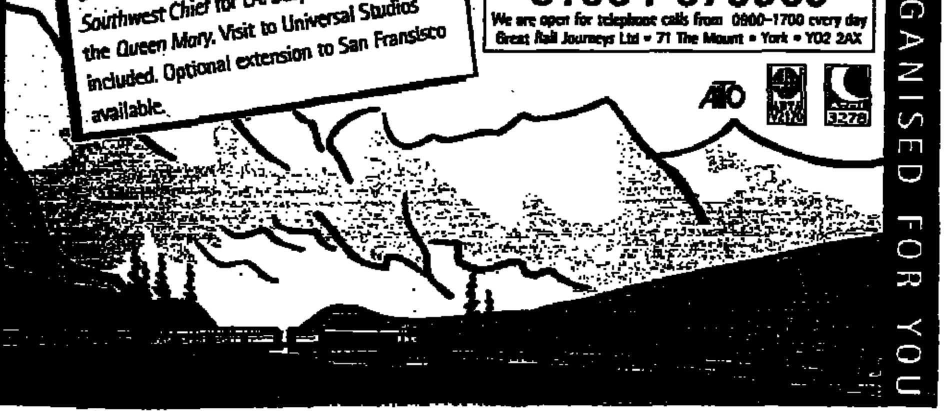

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PERTH	£336	£591	BOSTON	£126	£165	INDIA	£187	£329
CAIRNS	£385	£639	CHICAGO	£157	£191	JO'BURG	£264	£379
AUCKLAND	£374	£679	FLORIDA	£175	£226	CAPE TOWN	£319	£585
BANGKOK	£249	£396	LOS ANGELES	£182	£226	HARARE	£325	£495
HONG KONG	£244	£375	SAN FRANCISCO	£182	£261	NAIROBI	£198	£329
SINGAPORE	£299	£373	DENVER	£231	£231	DUBAI	£185	£297
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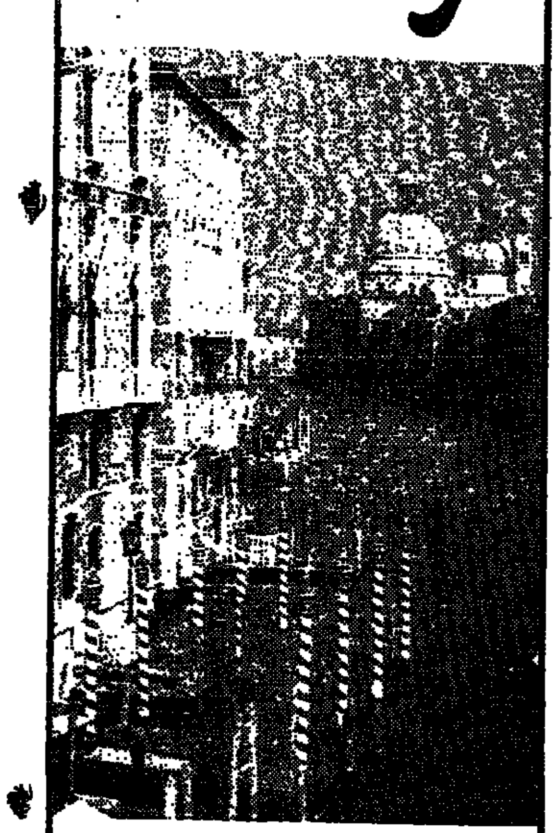

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ARE you this bubbly brunette's birthday wish? Stunning long legged law graduate (27 years today) seeks tall (6' plus) witty, caring, charismatic man, 27-37 years old. London & S.E. Please Reply to Box No 8871 ☎

ARISTOCRATIC attractive, slim, blonde with interesting lifestyle, WLTM successful, self made businessman, amusing personality who now has time to enjoy similar pursuits, travel, theatre, town and country, over 58. Photo appreciated and returned Bx 8966 ☎

ATTRACTIVE Professional lady, 39, happy, solvent, no ties, enjoys travel, countryside, evenings in and out, life in general, WLTM someone special to share it all with. London/ Surrey/ Hants. Box No 8980 ☎

BEST ever Xmas present. Beautiful, slim, solvent, n/s lady, wrapped with style, seeks sincere gent in every sense, age 45-62. Photo please. London/ Herts/ Bucks. Box No 8984 ☎

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BROMLEY, Bexley, S. London, Gravesend. Gentlemen over 55! Call Elite for details of our special rates. 0181 658 7576

EXCEPTIONALLY well educated lady, 39, an aesthete, connoisseur, warm, romantic, sensuous and beautiful, seeks kind, compatible gentleman forever. Please reply with photo to Box No 8996 ☎

LADIES

FUN loving, flame haired 30 something seeks new bestest friend for japes, jollity and romps in the sun/snow. My spiritual soulmate will be generous and supportive with a taste for luxury and a passion for women larger than life. Must love children. Reply Box no 8971 ☎

GENTLEMEN 50 and fabulous? Me too! So why are we anticipating yet another lonely Christmas? Let's at least try to do something about it this year. Letters only please. London area. Box No 8983 ☎

GENTLEMEN Don't be alone this Christmas! If you live in the West Midlands/ Warwickshire call Elite Introductions now. 0121 323 3314 open 7 days

INTERNATIONAL, vivacious, petite, brunette lady, 40 plus, WLTM an educated, art loving, fit, generous, 50-58 gentleman to share laughter & travel. London/ Surrey area. Please Reply to Box No 8960 ☎

INTERESTING, attractive, educated, warm-hearted, professional woman, many interests seeks soulmate, n/s, 47-57. S. Cheshire. ALA. Box No 8928 ☎

LONDON gentlemen required for our quality lady members Dovetail 0171 483 3377

LONELY de-coupled (35ish) white lady needs lots of TLC. Willing to return favour to right man. Let's enjoy cinema, eating out, going wild once in a while! S.W. London area. Please reply with photo to Box 8998 ☎

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RICHMOND, Kingston, Esher, Walton, Uxbridge (TW, KT, UB, HA) Business, professional men call Elite Introductions to meet some lovely ladies in time for Christmas 0181 580 0028

34, professional, vibrant, outgoing, sensual female, been told very attractive, seeks professional, 30-40ish, strong, colourful male with GSOH. Box No 8954 ☎

S. HERTS Attractive,warm prof, slim 5'6 seeks n/s arts loving 50s-early 60s man Photo. Bx 8424 ☎

STYLISH, attractive, prof lady with lively personality & GSOH, WLTM similar successful single prof male, 38+ to add a new dimension to her life. Cheshire/MR/cr area. Please Reply to Box No 8961 ☎

SURREY gentlemen required for our quality lady members Dovetail 01932 783165

SUSSEX - individual introductions to ladies of quality. Call Dovetail 01372 379900

THINKING man's friend: Eclectic, sincere, positive, feminine Continental lady, youthful 50's, would like the company of an accomplished, chivalrous gentleman to laugh, enjoy life and inspire new enthusiasms. London. Please reply to Box No 8847 ☎

TALL, statuesque blonde, late 40's, well educated, independent & sporty. Looking for tall, charismatic, interesting, sociable extrovert to share the riches of life together. London/ S.E. Box No 8890 ☎

TRUE description of my client as follows: Warm, well balanced, tactile, easy conversationalist, very attractive, dark haired, well spoken, successful, slim, divorcee. She is the sort of person you immediately warm to. My client wishes to meet someone who is also successful, professional, attractive, well built, tall, strong character. Looking for a meaningful relationship. 44-55. Integrity and sincerity. There is no charge for putting you in touch with my client. Just tel Heather Heber Percy, Country Partners on 01432 342246/342204 office hrs, or fax 01432 370381 or page on 01632 523 523 and ask for pager no 861501. All calls returned within three days. Also Reply to Box No 8992

WANTED: Intelligent, genuine gentleman with GSOH, 55-67, to impress my mother, unfortunately widowed. I do not seek to replace my wonderful father but merely to find companionship for this special, warm, attractive, fun, intelligent lady who is too young to be put out to pasture & who will kill me when she finds out about this ad! Own teeth essential, hair preferred but not necessary! Photo please. Please Reply to Box No 8958 ☎

HIGHLY EDUCATED - happy, romantic, French girl (London based) - long blonde hair. Feminine & slim. Chic & glamour, sexy even in your shirt. Sporty: Tennis, ski, shooting, horseriding. Artistic & interior design interests. Cosmopolitan business. WLTM tall - fun - energetic - successful gentleman, 39 plus, of similar education, assets & art de vivre. Taste for love & drop of eccentricity would be a magical plus. Please reply to box No 8730 ☎

NO more jealousy: convinced single female, 44, 5'6", slim, graduate WLTM intelligent, humorous male to enjoy only the nice moments with. Central London. Box No 8693 ☎

IS there a charming gentleman out there who would appreciate a platonic friendship with London widow, 51? Interests: Theatre, jazz, dining, countryside. Box No 8762 ☎

PRETTY, petite, 37 year old business woman is still unhitched and seeks tallish family man with integrity, age not important. My interests are the Arts, music, cinema, dining out & travel. Box No 8747 ☎

VIVACIOUS, vibrant, very attractive blonde, 46, seeks valiant, venturesome, viral man to vivify her life 48-62. Reply to Box no 8766 ☎

GENTLEMEN

ACCOMPLISHED, assertive, upper-class, mature Englishman: Wide interests; seeks unassertive female: Looks less important than adventurous spirit. London. Box 8764 ☎

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CHIVALROUS English gentleman. Athletic, 5'10", 57 years. No ties. Background in property/ publishing. Seeks interesting lady used to good standard of life. Non smoker. Box No 8993 ☎

COLETTE. You wrote regarding my advertisement but your phone no. is incorrect. Please Reply to "Masterful male" Box No 8559 ☎

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GUERNSEY - 35 year old professional, single, occasionally intelligent, recently arrived from the UK, no baggage, 6ft, considered good-looking. WLTM local lady (late 20's, 30's) for friendship with a view to relationship based on mutual sincerity. Discretion assured. Please Reply to Box No 9002 ☎

JOURNALIST, therapist, optimist, single father, gently easing into middle years, well preserved (own teeth & hair), tall, presentable, easy going, seeks caring, spiritual lady (up to mid 40's) for mutual TLC. Recent photo please. Surrey/ London. Box No 8957 ☎

LONDON ladies required for our quality gentlemen members Dovetail 0171 483 3377

MUNICH / S. Germany: British gentleman, tall, slim, interest in classical music and opera, travel, walking, desires companionship of cultured, stylish lady in early 40s with similar interests. Photo preferred. Please Reply to Box No 8982

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NUTCASE, stunning, slim & sexy, 22-32, if you're that you're bound to be fun! For businessman, 45, 5'7", who's guaranteed to make you laugh! Photo & tel. please. Glos/London. Please Reply to Box No 8953 ☎

RICHMOND, Kingston, Esher, Walton, Uxbridge (TW, KT, UB, HA) Ladies, don't be alone for Christmas. Call Elite Introductions for personal confidential service 0181 580 0028 7 days

OK so I have placed an advert, and not because I'm Quasimodo's brother. I am considered an attractive man, tall, divorced, successful, aged 44. Midlands based, you should be attractive, 28-38 & enjoy life. To find out more, why not reply to Box No 8989 ☎

PROFESSIONAL Gentleman. Divorced, no ties, 6' tall, n/s, easy-going, independent, successful, romantic, uninhibited, seeks special lady, 40+, for a lasting and caring relationship. Places love & affection, warmth, sense of humour, sincerity top of the list. Photo appreciated. Please Reply to Box No 8985 ☎

PROFESSIONAL male, 6'4", 32, seeks attractively slim, older (45-55), kind, affectionate, sensual female for fun & friendship. London/Surrey. Write with photo to Box 8528 ☎

SUCCESSFUL, bon viveur, widowed lawyer, Lloyds survivor with country house & town pad, seeks attractive, empathetic, solvent 40 year old in similar position with a view to halving joint problems & looking ahead. A photograph would be appreciated. Box No 8911 ☎

SURREY ladies required for our quality gentlemen members Dovetail 01932 783165

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TALL, dark, handsome gentleman, 41, educated and cosmopolitan, seeks very stylish and svelte female counterpart with beauty, dynamism and a fertile brain. London only. Photo please. Box No 8694 ☎

TALL, solvent graduate seeks lady, 55-65, to share country living, City culture, travel to remote corners and hopefully bridge. Recent photograph appreciated. Box No 8994 ☎

TALL, successful, intelligent, model-slim lady required for fun, friendship & maybe more. London/SE. Photo essential. ALA. Please Reply to Box No 8704 ☎

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GENTLEMAN, 32, sensitive, kind, GSOH, likes classical music, politics & conversation. WLTM similarly nice young gay gentleman, 25-35, for friendship, possibly relationship. Photo please. Box No 8646 ☎

GOOD-looking, successful, stylish London businessman, mid 30s, seeking Miss Santa Claus to fill empty pair of stockings under the tree. Looks important, legs essential. Photo appreciated. Reply to Box No 8610 ☎

GOOD-LOOKING, successful publishing director, early 40s, into travel, music, theatre, seeks 30 something, uncomplicated, slim but curvaceous romantic. Photo appreciated. London/ Bucks. Bx 8763 ☎

MASTERFUL white male, 56, a strict believer in Victorian morals & disciplines, WLTM a special lady with like-minded principles. Your age & looks are unimportant but like myself should have a GSOH & be a little mischievous. I am solvent with my own bungalow on the borders of SE London/ Kent. Box No 8559 ☎

SINCERE, honest, 6', fair, 37 year old. Likes countryside, seaside, music, dancing. Divorced, 3 children. Bucks/ Northants/ Oxford. Seeks similar fun-loving, slim lady for companionship & perhaps more. Box 8748 ☎

UNATTACHED company director seeks lady in her thirties. I'm slim, romantic and fun-loving. Photograph appreciated. Please Reply to Box No 8780 ☎

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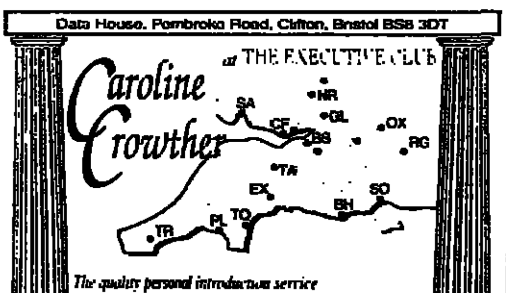

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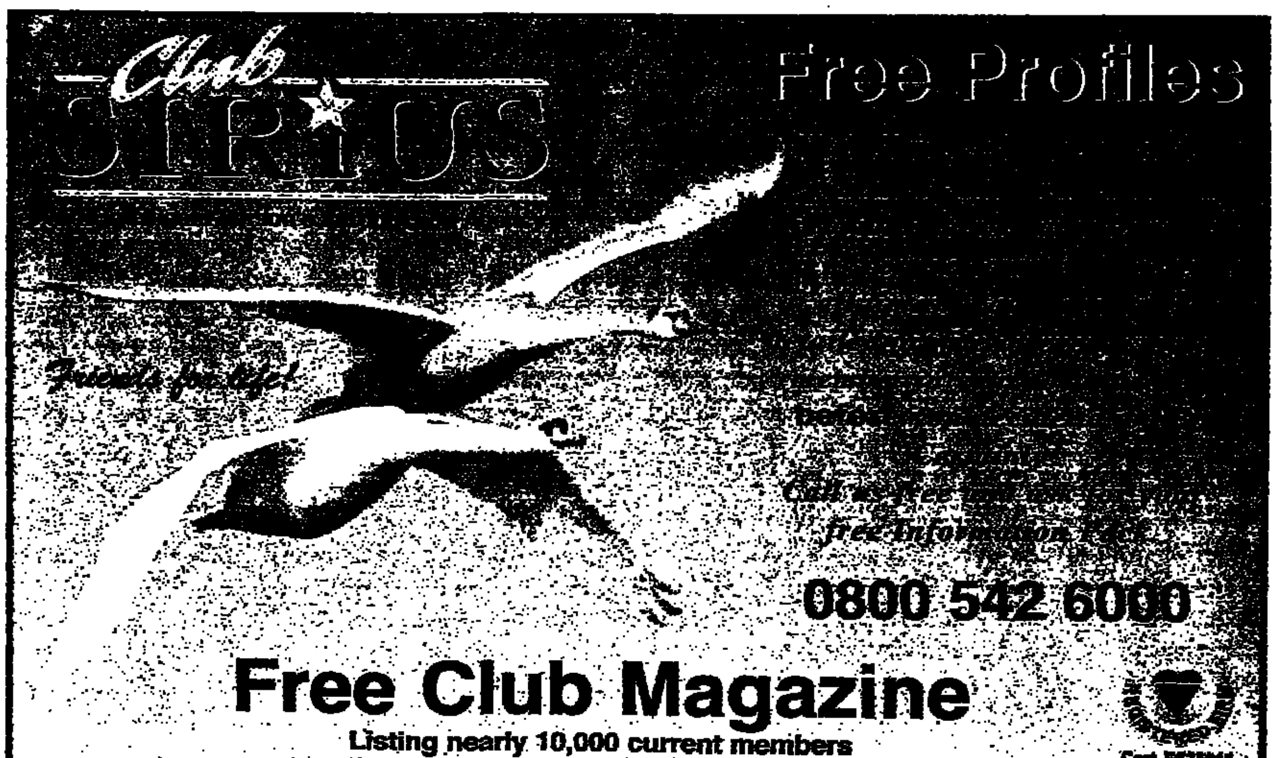

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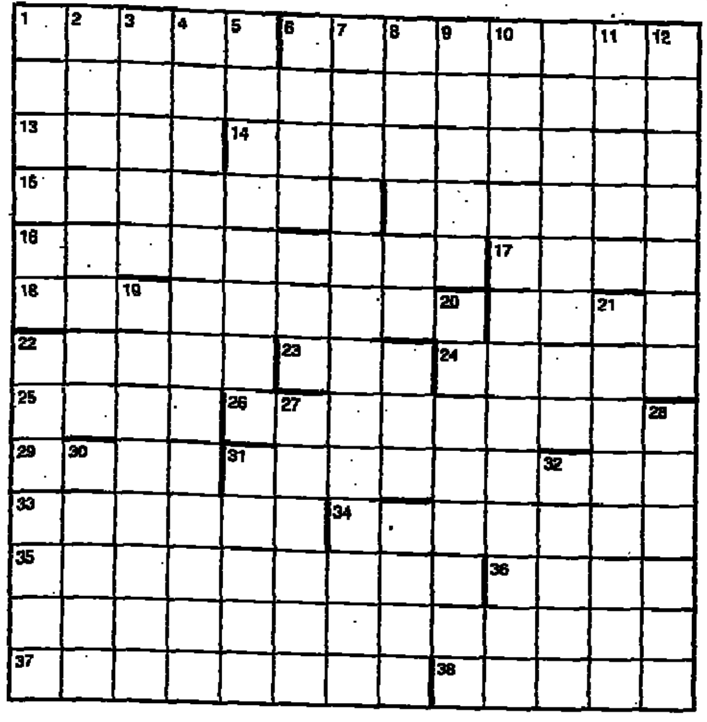
THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

No 3439: Cargo by Sabre



THE unclued lights represent possible cargo. Eight across and eight down clues are normal, but have answers jumbled before entry in the diagram. In remaining clues, one word has been jumbled: the answers are entered normally.

ACROSS

1 The Argo? See 6, perhaps (5).
6 The Cargonauts — trouble-makers taking one in? (8).
13 Logic circuits with choice of pole (4).
14 Colder sky disturbed yetis (9).
15 Maybe setters unbutton in good German society (7).
16 Buttered mix drips on stove (9).
17 Norse books: some recommended reads (4).
18 Prisoner of war wearing black eye — magenta? (9).
22 Could be following reverse bid (5).
23 Feature of cafe, topless cast (3).
24 Cook stew that is dismal (5).
25 Outstanding teak tree (4).
26 Certain tobacco stocks triple after shows (9).
29 Wager about Queen Vic's husband? (4).
33 I resent beginning an order (6).
34 Drapery, short one, fashionable (7).
35 Sailor born at sea owns glider (9).
36 Editor heard deer (4).
37 Blemishes indeed in affected English rose (8).
38 Sunburnt old Judge leaves later (5).

DOWN

1 Young fish, small aplastic anglers (6).
2 Half cops at present stick together (8).
3 Guys, rouged, in wings (5).
4 Unbearably burning issue about yellow cots (13).
5 Bardic Constable, utterly swell (8).
7 Lecturer, one mad about N E England print (13).
8 Modest object: first in examination (6).
9 Admirer of knight hugs younger sculptor (5).
10 Grandee could store one jade? (13).
11 Anodyne — Irish fly (5).
12 Grand gallery described by expert (7).
19 The Baltimore baller (8).
20 With arms spread in conjugal union (8).
21 Currency: peruse exchanged finesse (8).
22 Ignored crazy boaster (7).
27 Post of principal is nasty: gets one such icy features (6).
28 Josh's item for afternoon service (6).
30 A game, capturing desert emus (5).
31 Disorders of the gentleman's back, tedious (5).
32 Applaud, one hears, a round at Pebble Beach (5).

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in association with Waterstone's

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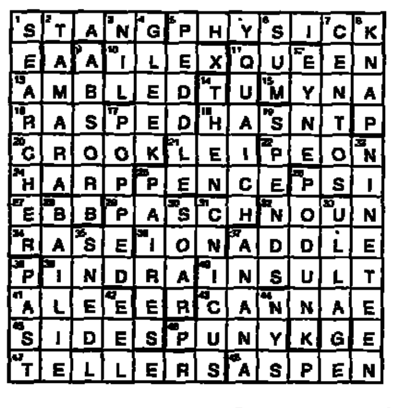


Solution and Notes to No 3436:
Potiores? by Petti

Difficiliores lectiones potiores?
Preferred readings spell "keys inside it" down the diagonal. Redundant words and, where appropriate, the preferred and the rejected readings are as follows:

ACROSS: 1. Take 5. Orderly; physick, physics 10. Rings 11. Evicts: queen, quean 13. Sedation 15. Old; myna, mina 16. Living 18. Vacancy; hasn't, haunt 20. Extra 21. Name: lei, lei 22. Unsavoury 24. Model 25. Early: pence, peace 26. Runic 27. Office 29. Unusual; pasch, parch 32. Spenserian 34. Aggression 36. Motor; ion, don 37 Bacchanalian 39. In; indra, intra 40. Ghetto 41. Underneath: alee, aloe 43. Inflicted 45. Toddle; sides. To; sedes 46. Initiative 47. Easy; tellers, sellers 48. Script

DOWN: 1. Something 2. Contains 3. Anomalous 4. New 5. Desiring 6. Island 7. Atomic: centos, cantos 8. Ground; knap, snap 9. Relative 11. Agitate, quaich. Augment; quatch 12. Magi; eyne. Many; eine 14. Fane; then; thea 17. Out; popped, popper 19. Real; spends, upends 23. Kept 25. Eavesdropping; paires, padres 26. Young 28. Secret; bailie; bailee 30. It; soar, roar 31. Needs 33. Suffers 35. Intimate; dens, dons 37. Distressed 38. Empire; past, pass 42. Intensity 44. Tolerable

The winner is: P. Ruff of Hampshire. The five runners-up are: A. Pearson of Perth, Tayside; B. Widger of Cheshire; M. Gantier of Walton-on-Thames, Surrey; P. Allwright of Hampshire and R. Stone of Worcester.

BRIDGE

by Robert Sheehan

WHAT do you make of the last bid in each of these auctions?

	West	East
A)	1 H	4 C
B)	1 D 3 S	1 H

In the first auction, if East had a good club suit and a strong hand he would start with Three Clubs over West's One Heart: in the second auction, West would show a good hand with diamonds and spades by rebidding Two Spades over East's One Heart response. So the extra jump shows some other type of hand, and most players nowadays use it as a "Splinter Bid".

In auctions in which a single jump in a new suit would be forcing, a double jump shows at least four-card support for partner's suit and shortage (usually a singleton but sometimes a void) in the bid suit, and a game-going hand. Splinters makes use of a bid not required for any other purpose — the hallmark of an efficient bidding agreement. They help determine whether the hands fit well for slam purposes. A typical East hand for the first auction would be:

♠A42♥KJ753♦A654♣5

In the second sequence West will have something like

♠4♥AQ75♦AJ654♣AK3

A splinter by responder usually occurs after an opening bid of one of a major. The hand should have around 11-14 points in high cards, and no good side suit. An example sequence is shown here.

♠AQ532 ♥5 ♦KJ32 ♣A105 (West) — N W E S — ♠KJ986 ♥AJ32 ♦4 ♣Q92 (East)

West	East
1 S	4 D
4 S	Pass

West can see his diamond holding of KJxx is facing a singleton, so signs off in Four Spades. If East's minor-suit holdings are reversed he starts with Four Clubs over One Spade; West can see the hands fit well and can make slam tries.

To splinter in response to a minor-suit opening the responder needs to be stronger than over a major-suit opening.

♠K95 ♥A52 ♦KQJ108 ♣94 (West) — N W E S — ♠AQ64 ♥7 ♦47642 ♣A107 (East)

Robson	Forrester
1 D	3 H (1)
3 S (2)	4 C (3)
4 H (3)	4 S (3)
5 D (4)	6 D (5)
Pass	

1) Splinter, showing good diamond support and a singleton heart.
2) Showing strength in spades.
3) Cue-bids.
4) At this point he has done enough.
5) With the queen of spades useful opposite West's presumed king he is full value for slam.

Next week in the daily column in Sport I will be giving further examples of auctions involving splinter bids.

WORD WATCHING

Answers from page 36

RHYSSA
(b) An ichneumon of the genus so called, the members of which prey upon the larvae of wood-boring insects, especially in conifers, and are usually black with white face and markings. The Greek word means "wrinkly".

RUNO
(a) In Finland, a short poem or song on an epic or legendary subject. Specifically, one of the songs which together constitute the Kalevala.

SAMPOT
(a) A kind of Cambodian sarong. French adaptation of the Cambodian *sampuet*.

PAHARI
(c) In full *gin pahit*, gin and bitters. In Malay *pahit* = bitter. "There was the euphoria of foreseeing ourselves in Maugham fiction — white-tuxedoed dinner-parties, the fans turning on the ceiling, gin pahits on the veranda, humid adultery behind the jalousies."

TWO BRAINS

From page 36

Question 1:
29. The number is reached through the sum of alpha position (A = 1, B = 2 etc), first letter plus the square of alpha position for the second letter. Thus T = 20 and C = 3, 20 + 3² = 29

Question 2:
Adieu and Audio

CHESS

by Raymond Keene

GOETHE wrote that chess was "the touchstone of the intellect". Lenin added that chess was "the gymnasium of the mind", while Leibnitz approved of "rational games, since they helped to perfect the art of thinking".

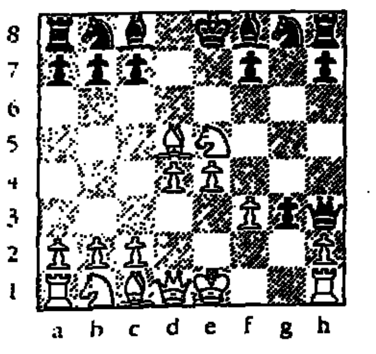
A little nearer home Shakespeare, too, had an acquaintance with chess and has Ferdinand and Miranda playing a game on stage in *The Tempest*.

However, none of these great minds actually has an authentic game recorded, unlike Tolstoy, several of whose games have come down to posterity.

This week I give two chessboard encounters by the author of *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*.

White: Count Leo Tolstoy; Black: Aylmer Maud
Russia 1906
King's Gambit Accepted

1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4
3 Nf3 g5 4 Bc4 g4
5 Ne5 Qh4+ 6 Kf1 d5
7 Bxd5 f3 8 gxf3 Qh3+
9 Ke1 g3 10 d4



White's opening has been too risky and here Black could win with 10 ... Qg2.

10 ... g2

After this error White succeeds in first stopping, and then rounding up, Black's passed g-pawn, after which his own counter-attack is victorious.

11 Rg1 Qh4+ 12 Ke2 Nh6
13 Rxg2 c6 14 Bxh6 cxd5
15 Bxf8 Kxf8 16 Qe1 Qe7
17 Nc3 f6 18 Nxd5 Qd6
19 Qg3 fxe5 20 Qg7+

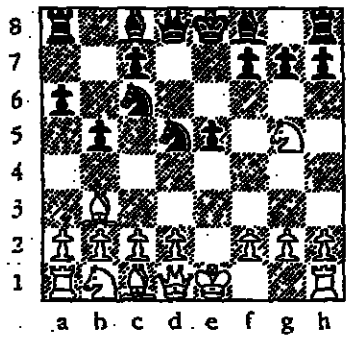
A neat irony, of which the great novelist himself would doubtless have approved.

White's winning move is a mirror image of the move with which black could have won on move ten.

20 ... Ke8 21 Qxh8+
Black resigns

White: Aylmer Maud; Black: Count Leo Tolstoy
Russia 1909
Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6
3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 b5
5 Bb3 Nf6 6 Ng5 d5
7 exd5 Nxd5



Tolstoy has tried a line of the Two Knights Defence, known as the Fegatello variation, which is known to be risky for Black on account of the following sacrifice against Black's most vulnerable point.

In its purest form the Fegatello, which has claimed many Black victims, goes thus: 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Nf6 4 Ng5 d5 5 exd5 Nxd5 and now 6 Nxf7.

8 Nxf7 Kxf7 9 Qf3+ Ke6
10 Nc3 Ncb4

For his piece Black's king is directly in the firing line, but this move blunders back the extra material. 10 ... Nce7 is best.

11 a3

Putting the question to black's entire rickety structure.

11 ... Bb7 12 axb4 Ra7
13 Qg4+ Kd6 14 Ne4+ Kc6
15 Qe6+ Bd6

White's attack is triumphant and Black could already have resigned with a clear conscience.

16 Bxd5+ Kb6 17 Bxb7 Rxb7
18 d3 Ka7 19 Be3+ Kb8
20 Rxa6 Re8 21 Qa2 c6
22 Ra8+ Kc7 23 Qa5+ Kd7
24 Rxd8+ Black resigns

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

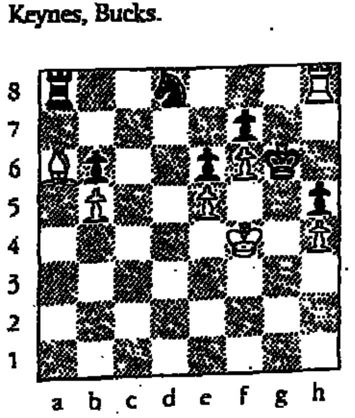
White to play. This position is from the game Speelman - Sax, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988.

Material is equal in this endgame, but White is very active and the Black forces are very tangled. How can White force the decisive breakthrough?

Send your answer on a postcard to *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The first correct answer drawn on Thursday will win a year's subscription to the Staunton Society. The answer will be published next Saturday.

Last week's solution: 1 Ng5

Last week's winner: K M Mutchell, Great Holm, Milton Keynes, Bucks.



COMPUTER GAMES AND PASTIMES

by Tim Wapshott

Two families will split £1,000 worth of Tiger Electronics games

ANXIOUS that Santa might not deliver quite enough presents to keep the *entire* household occupied well into 1998? In our latest competition, two families will split £1,000 worth of gaming goodies from Tiger Electronics. Top of each pile is a "game.com", the hand-held console which takes miniature game cartridges and can even be used as a basic link to the Internet.

The two £500 treasure chests will also include a child's laptop computer and a junior electronic organiser, Batman & Robin walkie talkies, Hercules and Lost World LCD games, a pair of Laser Tag zappers (one of the biggest sellers in America at the moment), voice changers and a Giga Pet.

Entering **Cyberspace Thirty-Nine** is very easy. All you have to do is send us your favourite seasonal joke. The judges will be looking for decent rib-ticklers. Entries, limited to one per household, should be clearly written and submitted on a postcard to: Cyberspace Thirty-Nine, Computer Games and Pastimes, Weekend, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.

You may also e-mail your jokes, marked Cyberspace Thirty-Nine, to *cyber@dircon.co.uk*. You must include your name, age, address and telephone number. The closing date is Tuesday, December 16. Normal *Times* competition rules apply.

THE **National Lottery** still keeps us on tenterhooks each Saturday, even if fewer of us tune in for the midweek draw on Wednesdays. At the official site (*http://www.national-lottery.co.uk/game/genplain.html*), you can look up facts and figures, check old numbers and even use the spooky on-line random number generator to make your choice. I say spooky because when I tried, it came up with four of the six numbers on my ticket and what are the odds of that happening? Now I am in a quandary. Perhaps, because these numbers have come up, it means they will never do so again in the real thing. On the other hand, could this be an omen telling me to keep playing because my numbers will be up shortly?

It may be spooky but, this coincidence aside, the generator is barely any fun to run. For every £1 spent on the lottery, only 28p makes its way to good causes and you can get a dreary overview at the site of the way this is divided.

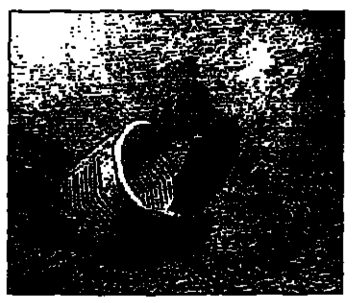
In effect, money destined to help others is dished out through one of five channels (Charities, Millennium, Sports, Heritage and Arts). There are several other Web sites offering random number selections. One is Steve Blundell's UK National Lottery Page (*http://www.llednulb.demon.co.uk*), where you can also track down details of likely numbers. Updated weekly, these are 18 numbers based on what has historically gone before. It includes those which have appeared most (currently 5, 25, 28, 43, 44, 45), six which have cropped up least (13, 15, 18, 37, 39 and 49) and an undefined "most overdue" list (7, 12, 13, 20, 26, 49).

Not all sites are a celebration of the money-spinner. As its title suggests, The Futility of the Lottery (*http://www.cgsystems.co.uk/futile.index.htm*) aims to knock the nation's get-rich-quick scheme for six with an intriguing experiment. Twice a week 10,000 new random selections are theoretically entered for the draws. The results make interesting reading. In a bad week, the imaginary £10,000 stake nets a profit of between £300 and £600, while the average return on the stake is said to be £2,699.43. Only three times since February has the experiment produced wins exceeding £10,000 — for £11,546, £14,504 and £15,203 respectively.

THERE is nothing new in getting your **computer to talk** to you. In the dark Eighties there were already several small DOS programmes which could take your text then read it aloud.

One of the latest incarnations of the genre is the Talk Back CD-Rom for Windows 95, available for a hefty £70 from several suppliers including Innovations (0990 807060). Define text in a regular file and at the push of a button it is read aloud in a female voice. Delivery has an appealing metallic feel and some pronunciations are hilarious.

NEW SOFTWARE



Sub Culture: looks glorious

SHOWING just how important it is to get the right title, Ubi Soft Entertainment sent out review copies of **Sub Culture** pointing out that "This is not a beat 'em up!". The game could not be further from urban violence, but it is easy to see that there could be confusion. The culture referred to here lives beneath the sea in submarines. The game is set in what should be a beautiful world, filled with coral, fish and other assorted and largely placid sea creatures.

But thanks to man, the serene surroundings are threatened. Human debris and toxins being poured into outlets above ground cloud the otherwise perfect picture.

A side effect of the contamination is that the sea creatures are now mutating. The game is played over a series of missions, starting with the exercise which fuels the gameplay. To upgrade your sub you must trade by collecting crystals to sell to a refinery. Mixed with the trading elements are the real adventures as you search and rescue others ducking and diving the mutants on your tail.

The lighting effects add plenty of atmosphere, especially the shafts of sunlight forcing their way beneath the waves and mottling the seabed. The game looks glorious but the action lacks urgency because of the setting. The water resistance at times means your sub is moving through treacle.

Verdict: 8 out of 10. Underwater odyssey at a leisurely pace. £39.99.

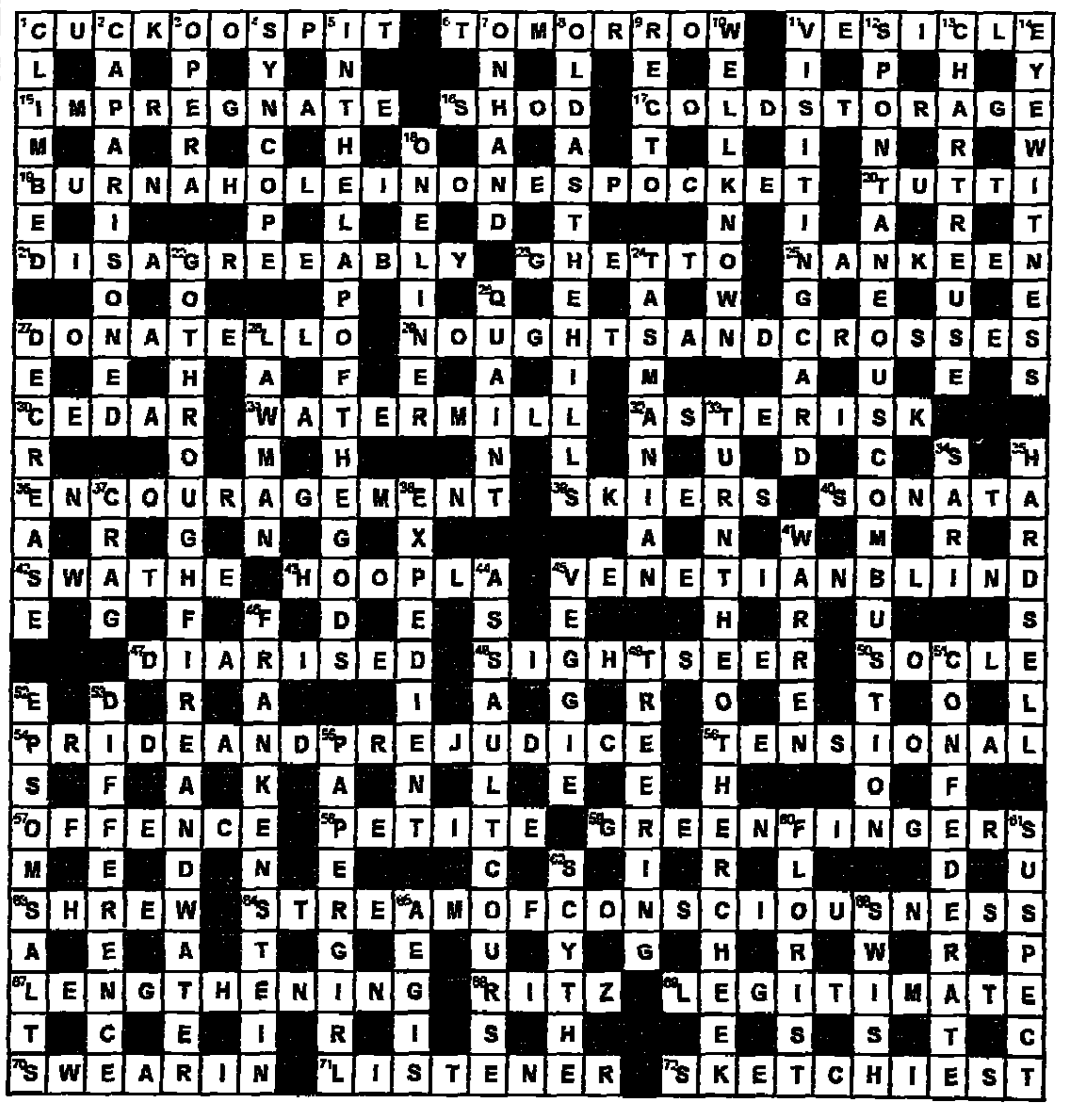
FLYING CORPS Gold is a First World War flight sim and aerial combat caper rolled into one. This is a revamped release of the successful Flying Corps but with a few nifty additions, including multiplayer modem possibilities. Scramble into the air in a choice of 19 authentic flying machines, like a Nieuport 28, Fokker Dri Triplane or Sopwith Camel, and pick off bandits at ten o'clock if you can.

There are plenty of campaigns to let you hone your dog-fighting skills or you can tailor challenges to suit with a new mission editor. Given the basic nature of the planes at your disposal, you are not confronted with a vast an array of dials, switches and controls.

Handling the craft takes some skill but there is nothing more rewarding than the first time you get an enemy plane in your sights and pluck it out of the sky. This revamped version also boasts improved artificial intelligence, so planes do not spin out of control as often and handle better when flown at low altitudes. This is a modest, and modestly priced, title from Empire but it serves up plenty of thrills and spills. The only thing you need to make more of the experience is one of those joke windswept scarves with a wire in it.

Verdict: 7 out of 10. Charming WW1 dogfighter. £29.99.

SOLUTION TO JUMBO CROSSWORD 137



The winner of an Alfred Dunhill AD2000, worth £125 is M.Carter of London W12

MODERN MANNERS

by John Morgan

Send your queries to Morgan's Modern Manners, The Times, *Weekend, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9NX*

Q **When a dinner-guest arrives at one's home clutching a bottle of wine, is it correct to serve that bottle at the meal (it might not be complementary with the food)? A friend recently suggested that a guest bringing a bottle might be anxious to ensure a really "decent" drink with his/her dinner — not wishing to leave such an important matter to his hosts. —** Anne Thomas, Datchet, Berkshire.

A A host is under no obligation to serve a bottle of wine brought by a guest. He may, however, decide that it could be opened if he feels it will be a suitable addition to the evening's enjoyment. For instance, I went to a dinner party recently where a German guest had brought two bottles of *Eiswein*. These were gleefully opened by our hostess to accompany the pudding and were a treat all round. I am not impressed by your friend's theory that people bring a bottle to ensure a "decent" drink with their meal and suggest his story speaks volumes about his friends and his cellar.

Q **Some weeks ago my wife and I put up some friends of my daughter's (husband, wife and two children) over a weekend. They left expressing their pleasure at having been with us and their hope that we should have them again. We were surprised that neither we nor our daughter received a note of thanks and wonder whether our expectation fails to take account of changing patterns of social behaviour. —** Name and address withheld.

A It is not you who is out of date, but your guests who are out of touch with good manners. If people have stayed in a house, it is still polite for guests to write a letter (not just a postcard) expressing thanks, pleasure and good wishes to their hosts who have been kind enough to offer hospitality.

Q **We are in the process of buying our Christmas cards. We hear that last year some Jewish friends were apparently rather upset by our choice of design. What can we do this year to avoid hurting the feelings of our non-Christian friends? —** Jane Clarke, London SW10.

A Avoid any overtly Christian imagery on the front of the cards. Also, make sure that the greeting within is suitably global and multi-denominational: "Season's greetings" is the safest.

Q **I have recently been promoted and have started to take clients out to lunch. Please can you give me some advice on hosting these lunches. When my guests are male the waiter asks me for my order first, when I am sure I should allow my guests to order. When in mixed company the waiter generally asks the ladies first. I presume as the host I should order last. I have also been in the situation where one of my male guests has been asked for his order first and he indicates I should order first. I am confused.** Jane Woottan, London SW1.

A I suggest you fall back on traditional restaurant form in which the host orders on behalf of his guests. This will not only cut through the confusion when ordering the food, but will also make it clear to possibly sexist waiters that you are the host and will be paying.

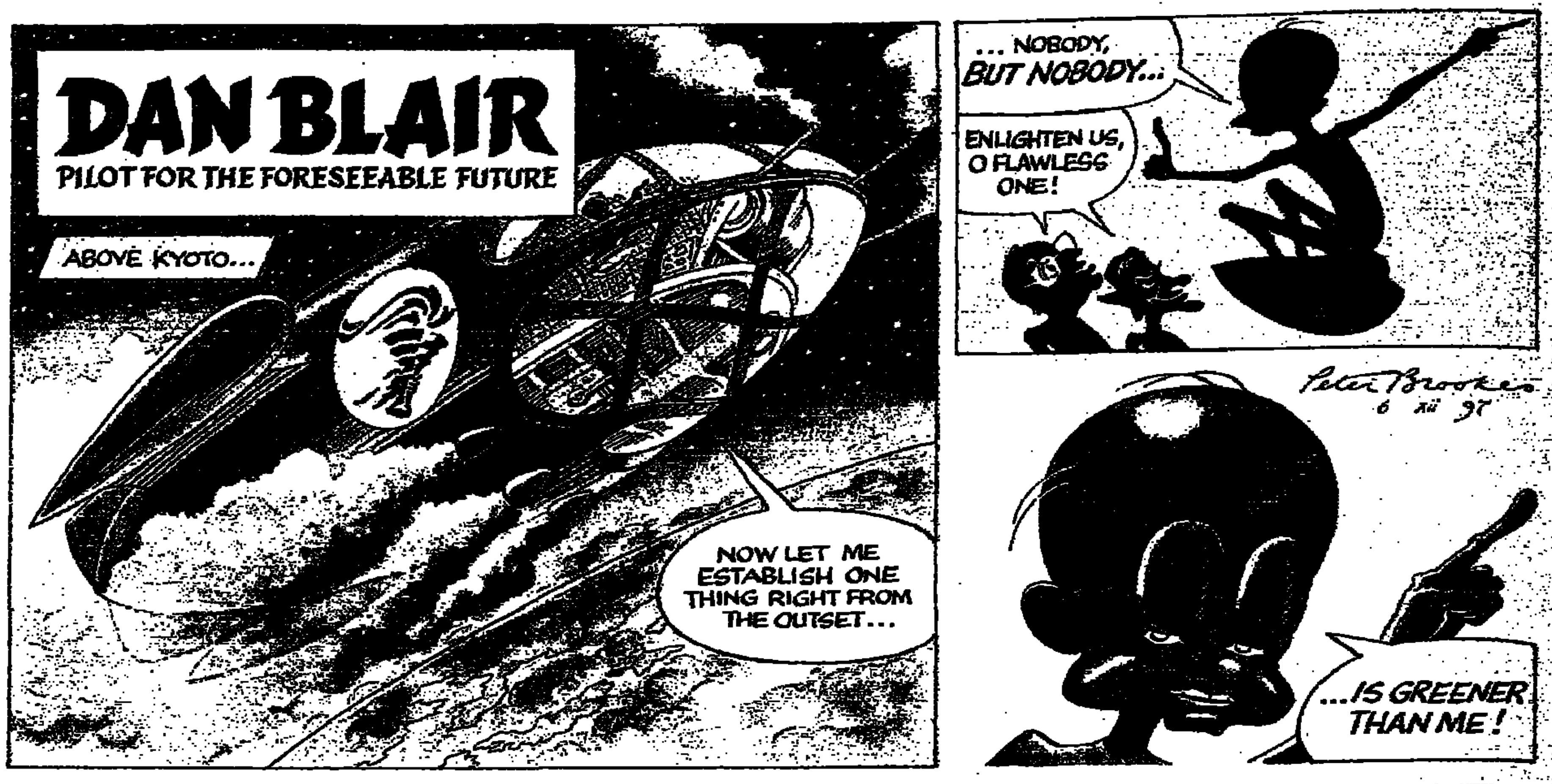
Q **Would you please tell me if it is correct to lay a place setting with the dessert spoon and fork across the top of the table mat: the fork handle to the right, or is it better to put them inside the knife and fork? Also if one is using a fruit knife and fork, where should they be placed in the setting of the table? Should they be handed out with the dessert plates? —** P. Henessy, London EC1.

A It is incorrect to lay a place setting with the dessert spoon and fork across the top of the place mat. Either put them inside the knife and fork or, if space is short, follow the old custom of bringing them to table when you serve the pudding. Concerning a fruit knife and fork, they should be brought to the table with the dessert plates and not be placed above the table mat.

Q **Recently I was invited for an all-expenses paid stay in a five-star hotel in the south of France. When leaving I decided that, as a guest, it was rude to look at the bill and left without checking it. Since then I have worried that this was rather rash. What would you suggest? —** P S D.

A As a corporate guest, always ask to check and sign the bill on the day of departure, particularly in places like the south of France where commercial opportunism is almost a way of life. This way you will avoid finding yourself in an embarrassing position similar to a well-known journalist, who once left an expensive Paris hotel oblivious to the fact that a massive bill was to be concocted and charged to her host. This fraud came to light months later when it was revealed that far from the heavy-duty entertaining charged to her room, she had retired each night with a bottle of Evian water and the latest Doris Lessing.

John Morgan is associate editor of GQ.


DAN BLAIR
PILOT FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE
ABOVE KYOTO...
NOW LET ME ESTABLISH ONE THING RIGHT FROM THE OUTSET...
... NOBODY, BUT NOBODY...
ENLIGHTEN US, O FLAWLESS ONE!
Peter Brookes 6 xii 97
...IS GREENER THAN ME!

WORD WATCHING

By Philip Howard

RHYSSA
a. A river nymph
b. A parasite
c. A rhetorical scream

RUNO
a. A short epic
b. Brownish grey
c. The Tibetan mongoose

SAMPOT
a. A sarong
b. Buffalo stew
c. The Mekong coracle

PAHIT
a. An interpreter
b. A spiced pancake
c. Gin and bitters

Answers on page 35

TWO BRAINS

IT IS possible to read and comprehend text at alarming rates. The leading speed-reading records of which I am aware are as follows: Sean Adam (USA) has claimed a record of 3,850 words per minute while Kjetill Gunnarson of Norway and Vanda North (UK) have respectively logged 3,050 and 3,000 words per minute. This column would welcome input from readers citing speed-reading records that might exceed these figures.

Question 1:
If DG = 53 and FT = 406, what does TC equal?

Question 2:
Name two five-letter words that use four different vowels plus the letter "d"?

Answers on page 35. **R.K.**

CROSS WORDS

by Brian Greer

When filling a grid, I take care to select words that look interesting and amenable to cluing. Each word is examined for special properties that will provide an opening. For example, has it an anagram or can it be treated as a charade? For another possibility, consider TEACHABLE. It can be seen as EACH inside TABLE — is that helpful? A favourite devious-but-fair ploy is to define "each" by "a head", which conveniently links with the target word. "Board" will do for "table", so the build-up can be specified by "Board brings in a head . . .". Add a judiciously chosen definition of the whole word and the clue is complete: **Board brings in a head ready to take classes (9).** As in this example, the necessary components are definitions of the containing word and the contained word, an indication that the former surrounds the latter, or the latter occupies the former, and a definition of the whole. Numerous variations are possible. For example, the container or contents may be an abbreviation, as in: **Saw dog being restricted by lead (7).**

Sometimes a word looks intractable: SYLLOGISM, for example. A possible solution is to use another manipulation, namely reversal. Can anything be done with GIS being surrounded by MOLLYS in reverse? If it is a down clue, the reversal can be indicated by "upset" (if it was an across clue, "backed" or "turned" or some such would be appropriate). Since "Molly" is a diminutive of "Mary", we can have "Little Mary's upset about soldiers . . .". But how to define "syllogism"? Recalling the women who could never agree because they were arguing from different premises, let's use "arguing on premises". "Soldiers" is hackneyed for GIs, so substitute "serving Americans": **Little Mary's upset about serving Americans arguing on premises (9).** On to the next word.

Answers for last week: wo(e)-man, Marshall, Hard Times, Royal Navy, overawing, manhandle, Scandinavian, disconsolate.

PICTURE LINE

When I said 'put me down!' I only meant...

READERS are invited to suggest what the Prince of Wales might be saying to this homeless man.

This picture, recently printed in *The Times*, will appear again next week with an entry chosen from those submitted.

Send "speech bubble" suggestions on a postcard with your name and address to PictureLine, Weekend, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, E1 9XN.

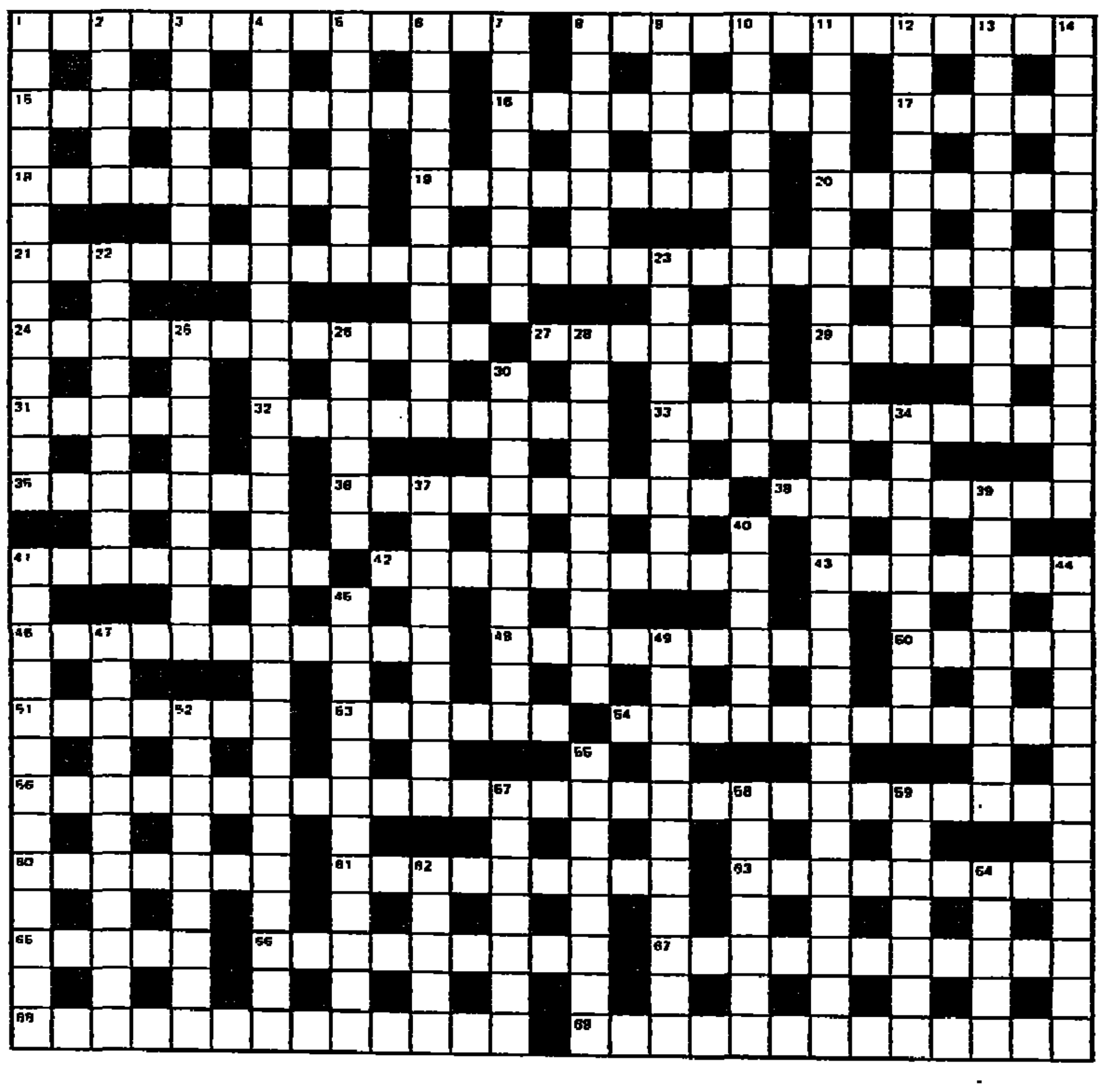
The Editor's decision is final. The closing date for entries is Wednesday, December 10.

Last week's winning caption, left, was submitted by Chris Drew of Manchester.

this week and every week
LIBRARY

JUMBO CROSSWORD 139

The prize for the first correct solution to be opened will be an Alfred Dunhill AD2000, worth £125, the world's first interchangeable, capless rollerball/ballpoint pen. Streamlined and made from black resin with a gold-plated clip, it has perfect writing balance. Entries should be sent to: Jumbo Crossword 139, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN to arrive by Monday, December 15. The name of the winner will be published on Saturday, December 20.



NAME ....

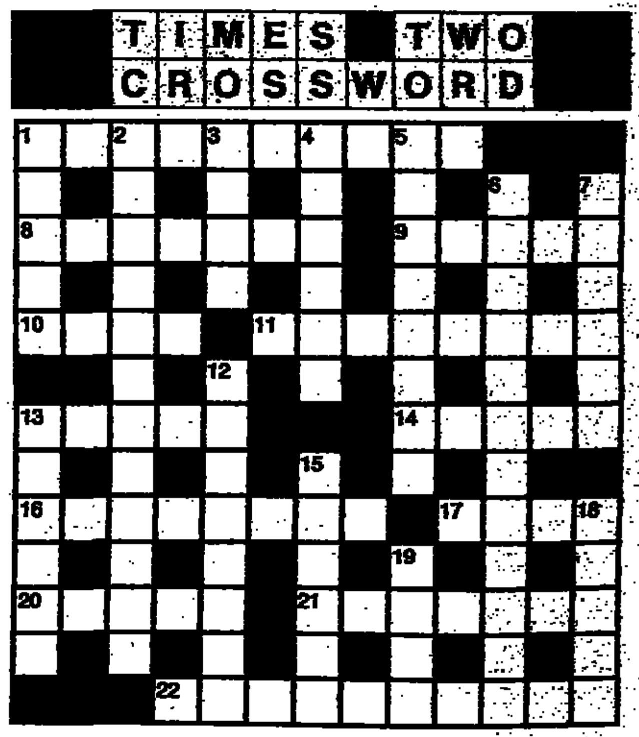
ADDRESS ....

....

.... POSTCODE ....

ACROSS
1 Managed to cut hesitation in gallery, and change characters on show (13)
8 The new saw lies abandoned — such a simple instrument (6,7)
15 A hat for Queen in highland town having no effect (11)
16 Local people in East Asia went astray (9)
17 Escape notice when coming in the day before (5)
18 Frank? Certainly not at home, because he's left here! (9)
19 House new partner in a rudimentary way (9)
20 Spouting black stuff — at work extracting oil (7)
21 Rome wasn't built in a day — as its constructor, when pressed, might have sung? (4,2,4,2,7,3,5)
24 Well-cleaned spades, repeatedly heading gold prospector's tools (5,3,4)
27 Pester badly for fix, at the outset (6)
29 Nice zoo rebuilt in former times (7)
31 Rewound recording about unknown exile (5)
32 Improving continuously without those people (2,3,4)
33 Initial investment in cash crop? (4,7)
35 A couple of novel characters meet PM (3,4)
36 Kept secret the majority of undies and — (vulgar, Ed) (10)
38 I am next to do without one, in unequal distribution (8)
41 Chary holding race in cold twice, as snow may be underfoot (8)
42 Faced up to new impudence in mixed school (10)
43 Succeeded with aluminium can, getting good preservation (7)
46 Showing some interest in this profession? (11)
48 Hebrews are following sources of honey — about right place in their wilderness (9)
50 Mission returning from Alamein secures it (5)
51 Note one horse about to be backed — in China? (7)
53 Is this bound in leather — calf, maybe? (6)
54 Dissecting corpse to run one by a lecture at first? (12)
56 Could "Poe wrote on both" answer this Carrollian riddle? (3,2,1,5,4,1,7-4)
60 Disordered state of America? That's nothing to you and me! (7)
61 Almost complete agreement in lines, area and radius — as most eclipses are (9)
63 Cube root? (5,4)
65 Part of Chaldean village built in Europe (5)
66 Low temperature beer, perhaps around zero — it's of debatable value (4,5)
67 East European governor's office organised VIP video show — not the last (11)
68 Cat may be torment for slow-moving creature (13)
69 Former MP sweetly rambling about run on heading from the Oval to Edgbaston? (5-8)

DOWN
1 Let *Pig and Whistle* get drunk in partial narcosis (8,5)
2 Victoria's afternoons — Queen and sovereign rising after middle of day (5)
3 Murphy, possibly — revolutionary, man and soul (7)
4 "I'd like full cover for the holiday" —— heard from one often on the road? (2,8,2,1,5,9)
5 Condition of horses you heard of, on the cheek (7)
6 Kill two animals with one neat shot (11)
7 Judge investing one million in property (8)
8 Top bowler (7)
9 Help! I'll be caught in rising magma (5)
10 First woman with lines heard to dry up, with no firm direction (12)
11 Hear me, Jenny, which common song is rearranged around hard civil war tune? (4,6,5,8,4)
12 In English, X covering ten, this at full length? (2,7)
13 Business done by mail in remote site for shopping (7,4)
14 Glycerine et al. mixed as explosive will go off (13)
22 Type of sheet of help in record copy run? (4,5)
23 Census put changes beyond doubt (9)
25 Capital put up for high-livers in Asia? (9)
26 English got in beer to begin journey (3,3)
28 Vigorous, as many steaks are eaten (3-7)
30 It's never brief in stir with prolongation in cell in mind (5,5)
34 Processed cereal and fruit left by son earlier (5,4)
37 One noisy and wildly unrestrained (9)
39 Sincerely flattering note sent up — object, musical to travel north? (9)
40 Beheaded what may be scaled reptiles (6)
41 Second organ added to church battle-cry? It aids force on entry (6,7)
44 Mature, but of dubious parentage, president executes unknown after angry murmur (4,4,5)
45 Defective in such valour? (12)
47 Source of heat for cooking (5,6)
49 What's used with a twist of orange in the vodka? (11)
52 Most of old Russia's trouble? It's sweetly unrefined (9)
55 "Novus" may be legal jargon (3,5)
57 One name yet to stick in American's mind (7)
58 Leading industrial place (Suffolk) with its County Hall? (7)
59 Weapon concealed in man's clothing (7)
62 Overlying rock with partly green appearance (5)
64 Number appearing as one alternative I left out? (5)



No 1270

ACROSS
1 Gamble everything (2,3,5)
8 Clothes washing (7)
9 Father's granddaughter maybe (5)
10 Shacks (4)
11 At any convenient time (8)
13 Carrion-feeding pack hunter (5)
14 Tell off (child) (5)
16 Stop that!; how to detach eg coupon? (3,2,3)
17 Smile broadly; ship's breadth (4)
20 Water of forgetfulness (5)
21 Tory PM; made a Declaration (7)
22 Ill-disposed, aloof (10)

DOWN
1 US ravine (5)
2 The press (*Macaulay*) (6,6)
3 Be passenger (4)
4 Musical beat (6)
5 A good turn (8)
6 Fail to interest (5,3,4)
7 Have angry surge (3,3)
12 All the gods; their temple (8)
13 Disrupt (speaker) (6)
15 Move clumsily; unwanted goods (6)
18 Tie the knot; I say! (*Shak.*) (5)
19 Blackthorn (fruit) (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1269
ACROSS: 1 Lode 3 Specimen 8 Noun 9 Grumbles 11 Split hairs 14 Oeuvre 15 Throne 17 Now or never 20 Analysis 21 Crop 22 Patience 23 Zest
DOWN: 1 Long shot 2 Double up 4 Purdah 5 Comprehend 6 Moll 7 Nest 10 Stereotype 12 Converge 13 Decrepit 16 Zodiac 18 Warp 19 Dart

THE TIMES BOOKSHOP

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ATTRACTIVE Professional lady, 39, happy, solvent, no ties, enjoys travel, countryside, evenings in and out, life in general, WLTM someone special to share it all with. London/ Surrey/ Hants. Box No 8980 ☎ ✉

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GENTLEMEN 50 and fabulous? Me too! So why are we anticipating yet another lonely Christmas? Let's at least try to do something about it this year. Letters only please. London area. Box No 8983 ☎ ✉

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LONDON gentlemen required for our quality lady members Dovetail 0171 483 3377

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THINKING man's friend: Eclectic, sincere, positive, feminine Continental lady, youthful 50's, would like the company of an accomplished, chivalrous gentleman to laugh, enjoy life and inspire new enthusiasms. London. Please reply to Box No 8847 ☎ ✉

TALL, statuesque blonde, late 40's, well educated, independent & sporty. Looking for tall, charismatic, interesting, sociable extrovert to share the riches of life together. London/ S.E. Box No 8890 ☎ ✉

TRUE description of my client as follows: Warm, well balanced, tactile, easy conversationalist, very attractive, dark haired, well spoken, successful, slim, divorcee. She is the sort of person you immediately warm to. My client wishes to meet someone who is also successful, professional, attractive, well built, tall, strong character. Looking for a meaningful relationship. 44-55. Integrity and sincerity. There is no charge for putting you in touch with my client. Just tel Heather Heber Percy, Country Partners on 01432 342245/342204 office hrs, or fax 01432 370381 or page on 01532 523 523 and ask for pager no 861601. All calls returned within three days. Also Reply to Box No 8992

WANTED: Intelligent, genuine gentleman with GSOH, 55-67, to impress my mother, unfortunately widowed. I do not seek to replace my wonderful father but merely to find companionship for this special, warm, attractive, fun, intelligent lady who is too young to be put out to pasture & who will kill me when she finds out about this ad! Own teeth essential, hair preferred but not necessary! Photo please. Please Reply to Box No 8968 ☎ ✉

HIGHLY EDUCATED - happy, romantic, French girl. (London based) - long blonde hair. Feminine & slim. Chic & glamour, sexy even in your shirt. Sporty: Tennis, ski, shooting, horseriding. Artistic & interior design interests. Cosmopolitan business. WLTM tall - fun - energetic - successful gentleman, 39 plus, of similar education, assets & art de vivre. Taste for love & drop of eccentricity would be a magical plus. Please reply to box No 8730 ☎ ✉

NO more jealousy: convinced single female, 44, 5'6", slim, graduate WLTM intelligent, humorous male to enjoy only the nice moments with. Central London. Box No 8693 ☎ ✉

IS there a charming gentleman out there who would appreciate a platonic friendship with London widow, 51? Interests: Theatre, jazz, dining, countryside. Box No 8762 ☎ ✉

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SATURDAY RENDEZVOUS

GENTLEMEN

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JOURNALIST, thespian, optimist, single father, gently easing into middle years, well preserved (own teeth & hair), tall, presentable, easy going, seeks caring, spiritual lady (up to mid 40's) for mutual TLC. Recent photo please. Surrey/ London. Box No 8957 ☎ ✉

LONDON ladies required for our quality gentlemen members Dovetail 0171 483 3377

MUNICH / S. Germany: British gentleman, tall, slim, interest in classical music and opera, travel, walking, desires companionship of cultured, stylish lady in early 40s with similar interests. Photo preferred. Please Reply to Box No 8982 ✉

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PROFESSIONAL male, 6'4", 32, seeks attractively slim, older (45-55), kind, affectionate, sensual female for fun & friendship. London/Surrey. Write with photo to Box 8528 ☎ ✉

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GOOD-looking, successful, stylish London businessman, mid 30s, seeking Miss Santa Claus to fill empty pair of stockings under the tree. Looks important, legs essential! Photo appreciated. Reply to Box No 8610 ☎ ✉

GOOD-LOOKING, successful publishing director, early 40s, into travel, music, theatre, seeks 30 something, uncomplicated, slim but curvaceous romantic. Photo appreciated. London/ Bucks Bx 8763 ☎ ✉

MASTERFUL white male, 56, a strict believer in Victorian morals & disciplines, WLTM a special lady with like-minded principles. Your age & looks are unimportant but like myself should have a GSOH & be a little mischievous. I am solvent with my own bungalow on the borders of SE London/ Kent. Box No 8569 ☎ ✉

SINCERE, honest, 6', fair, 37 year old. Likes countryside, seaside, music, dancing. Divorced, 3 children. Bucks/ Northants/ Oxford. Seeks similar fun-loving, slim lady for companionship & perhaps more. Box 8748 ☎ ✉

UNATTACHED company director seeks lady in her thirties. I'm slim, romantic and fun-loving. Photograph appreciated. Please Reply to Box No 8750 ☎ ✉

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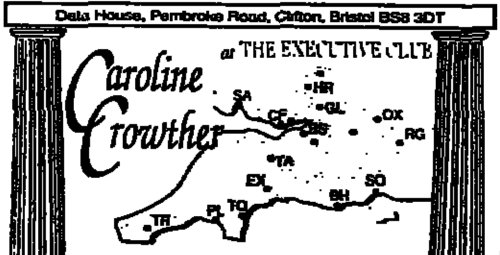

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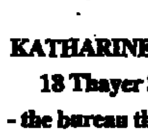

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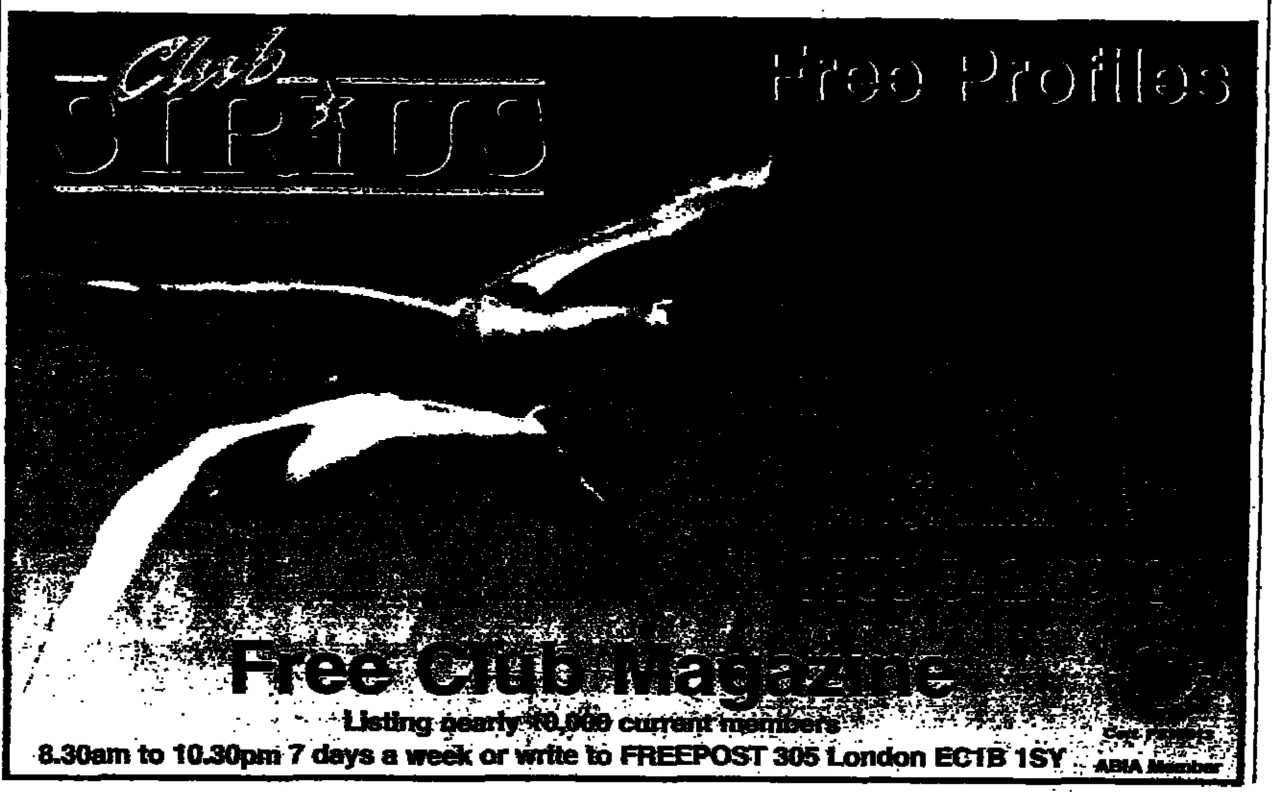

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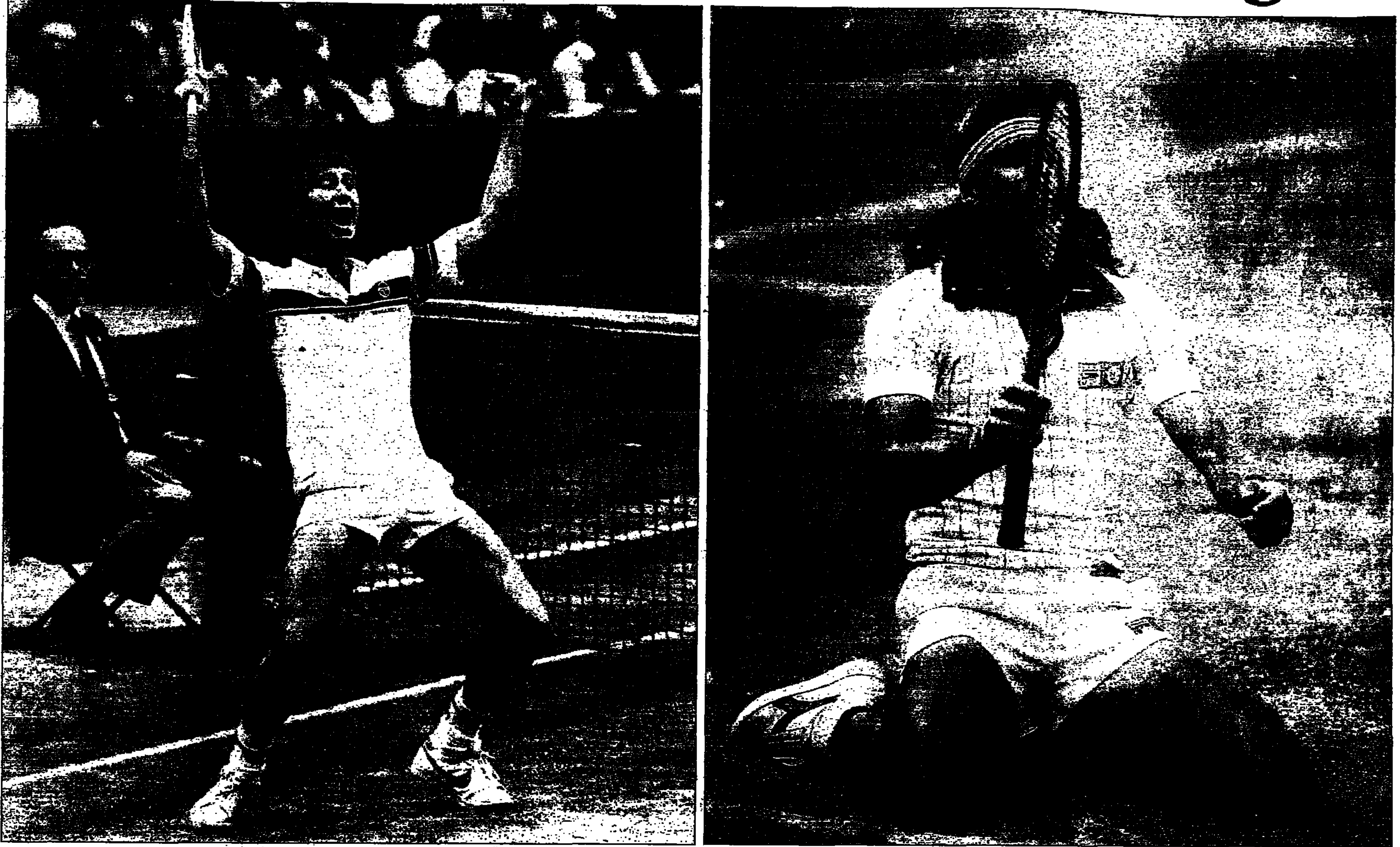
Julian Muscat watches Borg and McEnroe renew the rivalry that transfixed the Centre Court

Legends revive a golden age



Victor and victor: the contrasting images of McEnroe, left in 1981, and Borg, in 1980, reveal much about their emotions in winning their respective first and fifth Wimbledon titles, elation for the American, relief for the Swede

IT IS more than 16 years since John McEnroe and Bjorn Borg last met on British soil. On that occasion, McEnroe mastered his old adversary in the 1981 Wimbledon men's singles final, the Centre Court making an appropriate stage for their vast talents. Fittingly, they renewed their once-intense rivalry in the Royal Albert Hall yesterday — and there was no lack of intrigue among a capacity crowd.

Time's passage has left its mark on both players. Their groundstrokes bore less spite than in bygone days. Nevertheless, it made an eerie experience to have their mannerisms reincarnated. Right to the last detail, they are more sedate versions of the men whose Wimbledon exploits captivated this country for a decade. Borg still hurries between points as though inhabiting the corridors of a school that bans running. McEnroe still uncoils a mean service, still conjures angles of which most players can only dream.

Yet there was far more to it than that. Even a 16-year hiatus has done nothing to dampen the old alliances. There were no neutrals among 3,500 spectators — most, it has to be said, rooting for the brash New Yorker. In their prime, these two players divided the allegiance of the Centre Court and shared seven matches apiece in a rivalry severed prematurely when Borg retired. He was just 26.

Here was peculiar evidence that McEnroe's apocalyptic reign has left a greater resonance among fans than Borg's impeccable demeanour. For all his Wimbledon titles, Borg's robotic ruthlessness leaves him less appreciated than the tempestuous McEnroe, the winner of three Wimbledon titles among seven grand slams to his name. It seems that the currency of notoriety far outweighs the value of a pristine note.

McEnroe won this renewal in a decisive and elongated tie-breaker after the first two sets were shared. After Borg captured the opening set, it was a surprise that McEnroe managed to level the contest. The years have been less kind to *him* than to Borg, whose baseline speed remains intact.

After a turbulent decade, Borg appears in remarkably fine shape. His blond locks are now shorn, so that he might easily pass for one of the founding fathers of Abba, Sweden's other famous European export, and the fusillade of passing shots that he struck past his startled opponent further illustrated the contrasting qualities of these former gladiators. While Borg's trademark groundstrokes are a legacy of the practice grounds, McEnroe trusted more to instinct, relied greatly on the triumvirate qualities of touch, feel and anticipation.

Borg can summon a regimented precision almost at will. Those shots are as ingrained in him as the act of breathing. McEnroe's assets are always quick to desert those advancing in age. On occasions, he looked leaden-footed when confronted by Borg's passes. When he could afford that extra split-second, however, he was lethal on the volley. His ability to improvise was a priceless gift that time had largely repossessed. Borg's remarkable speed served to remind that McEnroe's drop shots had to die on the bounce, that only the finest of angles would counter Borg's baseline patrols — and so it was here.

The body language between them was as potent as ever. Borg would be ready and waiting to serve as McEnroe fretted behind the baseline, forever delaying the Swede, forever trying to break his formidable concentration. While Borg sat implacably during changeovers, McEnroe's balding head would be swathed in his towel, his expression never less than fraught. Certainly, McEnroe's opening service game was a cameo of old: an ace, followed by Borg effortlessly passing the American with a return of service, followed by a McEnroe service that smacked a line judge straight in the midriff. It was as if they had never left the spotlight.

The critics complained, traditionalists were horrified, but the crowds loved to see McEnroe rail against authority

And, of course, there were McEnroe's tantrums — utterly contrived on this occasion. In their playing days, McEnroe's respect for Borg ran so deep that he never erupted on court. Here, he stage-managed a row with the umpire for the sake of the gallery. He gratuitously incurred himself a warning for ungentlemanly conduct, although his impromptu exchange with Borg, after the latter had foot-faulted in the decisive tie-break, was a real gem. "Do you get bad calls sometimes?" Borg asked of his opponent. "You've got to roll with the punches," was McEnroe's fatherly advice.

It was uncanny how that tie-break brought out the best in both men. If McEnroe appeared exhausted long before its advent, his pride took over from the opening point. So enjoyable was this passage that McEnroe later lamented that it brought the match to a hasty conclusion. "I wish we were still playing," he said 15 minutes after departing the court. "I was just getting into it and we are not that old that we can't play a third set."

The merest mention of the phrase "tie-break" in the context of Borg and McEnroe is enough to trigger any number of memories. In the 1980 Wimbledon final, they played what is described as the most memorable passage in the modern era. Borg had five match points and McEnroe seven set points before the latter prevailed 18-16 to force a fifth set, which Borg eventually claimed for his fifth straight title. He accrued 11 grand slams in his abbreviated career.

McEnroe said later that he would have mixed feelings about playing Borg again on the Centre Court at Wimbledon. He explained that it wasn't always wise to get too close to the bone. However, such has been the impact of these two titans in London this week that discussions are under way to stage a similar event in the Wimbledon build-up. Should the two events run concurrently, the contemporary clan, all grunt and muscle, are in danger of playing to empty houses. The crowds might well flock to the seniors, who are playing for fun.

Down but not out, McEnroe sprawls on the Centre Court turf after being beaten by another Borg passing shot in the 1980 final. He had his revenge 12 months later

BJORN BORG

Who would have thought that Bjorn Borg, calm of eye and infused with an impenetrable inner confidence, would embrace retirement and be denounced for his childlike obsessions and sorry lack of judgment. That is the lot of the darling of Wimbledon, the teenage sensation whose life reveals a litany of personal catastrophes.

Borg, 41, epitomised the middle-England virtues of grace and manners, yet he has emerged as a victim of contemporary sporting culture, in which endless hours of practice replaced the onset of puberty. The man once hailed as sport's finest ambassador has disintegrated beneath two tempestuous divorces and an acrimonious paternity suit over his child by a teenager he ran away with after adjudging her the winner of a wet T-shirt competition.

Since quitting the game in 1983, his disastrous forays into business have become legion. He is the saddest of all men: the one with the mind of a child, reduced to making ends meet through a sordid autobiography in which he described himself as the sex prisoner of his second wife, Loredana Berte, the Italian rock star. An attempt at suicide in 1989, which he denies, suggested that life itself had imprisoned the man whose only sanctuary was the tennis court.

That same arena now offers him redemption. Now embedded in a long-standing relationship with Kari Bernhardt, an American restaurant owner, Borg's personal circumstances are more settled. The seniors tour affords him a comfortable living, if one far removed from the immense personal fortune that he squandered.

Borg always appears locked in a time capsule. In 1989, when making his abortive comeback, he insisted on using his defunct wooden racket. Even now, he is attempting to capitalise on his teenage allure. As we shed our teenage obsessions, Borg attempts to recreate them with personally-embossed underpants for our consumption. Once again, he has missed life's point.

It was commonplace to hear commentators innocently describing Borg's on-court presence as beyond human bounds. They were right for the wrong reasons. We must hope that the man deprived of his best years can find solace in those that remain.

JOHN McENROE

Who would have thought that John McEnroe, wild of eye and possessed by rampant demons, would embrace retirement and be voted Father of the Year by an American national magazine? That is now the lot of the beast of Wimbledon, the *enfant terrible* who terrorised umpires and tormented opponents like none before him.

McEnroe, 38, is the proud patriarch of five children and the proprietor of a New York gallery specialising in less celebrated art. He could not be further removed from his autobiographical caricature of a ranting, graceless genius who would appear just one step removed from acts of violence, his face contorted, its features betraying bouts of debilitating mental turmoil. It now emerges that the Centre Court's chalk boundaries represented the bars of his prison cell, an arena of claustrophobia within the broader boundaries of life.

One wonders how McEnroe, who retired in 1992, would have coped with the contemporary game. His artesian qualities might have been crushed underneath its brute force. His fragile physique offers reason to doubt his ability to dominate and it is relevant that McEnroe ruled through the last years of the wooden racket, an implement, like a violin, of resonance and touch.

His most predictable act has been to front a rock band with his second wife, Patty Smyth, for he brought the rock element to the court — that untamed hair of the late 1970s, barely contained within that flaming red headband. His only aberration, if indeed one can so describe it, is his failed marriage to Tatum O'Neal, daughter of Ryan.

He describes modern tennis as boring without realising that his departure has made it so. How could he possibly enjoy looking in from the outside, without caring whether each ball is in or out, without the adrenalin coursing his veins? It was all about winning and so it remains.

"As you get older," he said, "the pain of losing is greater and the joy of winning is diminished." Those words reveal everything about McEnroe's on-court demeanour. As for his metamorphosis off it, one must borrow from his vernacular to exclaim: "You cannot be serious!"

FOOTBALL SATURDAY

BRIAN GLANVILLE

Wenger languishes under the curse of Cliff Bastin

The birds are coming home to roost at Highbury. No surprise to those of us who have been predicting as much all season, arguing that Arsenal's misguided transfer policies and their abysmal lack of discipline would cost them dear in the end; as would their massive reliance on Dennis Bergkamp.

True, they impressively beat Manchester United even without him. But the dire performance against Liverpool last Sunday emphasised the bleak effects of what they and their French manager, Arsène Wenger, have left undone.

One thing Wenger could scarcely have foreseen was the vertiginous loss of form of Ian Wright, for so long a host in himself, a marvellous opportunist, Arsenal's Goleador. Could one speak, with any justice, of the curse of Cliff Bastin? The media played up beyond all sense the significance of the goalscoring record of the former Arsenal and England forward. The comparisons were not only odious but quite irrelevant, so many of Wright's goals having been scored in competitions that did not even exist when Bastin was playing. Alas, Wright seemed to take all that statistical nonsense seriously. As he approached his supposed record, his goals dried up and they are yet to flow again.

This, over the years, is something that happens to strikers. Somehow or other, some time or other, the goals stop coming. Wright, at 34, still has his health, speed and strength. Whether going to see a psychologist, to tame his more aggressive instincts, has something to do with it, who can say?

An Ian Wright who is kind to referees, tolerant to jeering fans and prepared to dance cheek-to-cheek with Peter Schmeichel, is no doubt to be morally admired but something may be lost in the transformation. So we have the irony of Wright, so often in disciplinary trouble, incurring no more yellow cards — let alone red ones — but no longer putting the ball in the net.

In an ideal world, there would be someone to step into his boots until the goalscoring urge returns. At Arsenal, indeed, Nicolas Anelka, having scored that goal against Manchester United, looked as if he might be the man. His performance against Coventry City in the Coca-Cola Cup was vibrant until he got injured, but since then, alas, he has not been able to play.

John Hartson? It is perhaps unfair to blame Arsenal and Wenger for selling him, a matter of being wise after the event. At the time he left for West Ham for a supposed £5 million which for the moment looks more like £3.3 million. Arsenal looked to have the better of the deal. At West Ham he has taken wing, but these things happen.

Far less excusable was the sale of Paul Merson, an Arsenal man through and through, whatever his troubles with drink, drugs and gambling, who is clearly recovering his form and can play in a variety of attacking positions. How Arsenal could do with him now.

It was significant that before the season, no less a figure than Dennis Bergkamp himself expressed his surprise and disappointment that Merson had gone.

Arsenal, on the whole, have bought badly. That they are looking now at a young Portuguese centre back is no surprise, especially remembering the embarrassment caused to Tony Adams and Martin Keown by Liverpool's little Michael Owen last Sunday. Each in turn treated Owen shamefully.

There is no replacing a Bergkamp but when Patrick Vieira drops out as he has recently done, who is to replace his power?

His fellow Frenchman Petit, essentially a defender, has power but scant finesse. Wreh, Boa Morte, Mendez and Upson are not yet ready for the demands of the Premiership. And no player, deplorably, has been found to make the wheels turn in midfield, to carry on the great tradition set by Alex James between the wars.

Redfearn basks in limelight of centre stage

Mark Hodkinson meets the doughty club captain, enjoying the attention afforded by life in the Premiership

JUSTIN SLEE / GUZELIAN

Redfearn, the ultimate football journeyman, reflects on the long and winding road that has taken him to Barnsley via eight other clubs

LIFE AT THE TOP

Successful footballers have their own particular accessories and Neil Redfearn, the Barnsley captain, is no exception as he arrives in a BMW, wearing a baseball cap and with his agent.

For a few rueful seconds, he looks the identikit FA Carling Premiership footballer, set reluctantly to wring out a few words of bland wisdom in exchange for discreet mentions for the sponsors of his tracksuit, boots or haircut. About as discreet as a Roy Keane tackle, that is.

He winds down the window of his car and beams a smile warm enough to melt the frost smattered across the hotel grounds. "All right, lads?" he says in a dense Yorkshire accent. "I won't be a minute, I'm just looking where to park this car." When they come to make the rags to riches, Hartlepool United to Arsenal, Gow to Di Matteo biopic of Redfearn, American audiences will need subtitles.

Our photographer senses immediately Redfearn's congenial nature and proposes a few shots before the interview. Normally, this request comes after some banal, sycophantic chat, during which time the subject is sufficiently *softened up* for a trial by camera. "No problem," Redfearn says, and sits down on the cold hard steps outside the hotel. He does not ask that we photograph his good side, or indeed his sponsored side.

His agent is a sweet, middle-aged lady called Margaret. "I've just come to make sure everything is all right," she said. There is no talk of fees or copy approval. Plates of mince pies are brought before us and Redfearn hands her a bundle of mail. "She's great, is Margaret. She's my press agent really," he said. "I get loads of mail each week and she helps sort it all out. It's amazing how much I get now we're in the Premiership."

Redfearn, at 32, has taken 17 years, eight clubs and more than 600 matches to reach football's top table. He is the ultimate football journeyman; a reliable, intelligent playmaker with a thunderous shot and a penchant for scoring spectacular goals.

Earlier in the season Barnsley played Chelsea at Oakwell and Redfearn was singled out by Di Matteo. "He was telling me what he was going to do to me and I had to laugh really. I've been to places like Hartlepool where there used to be holes in the dressing-room walls and I've played in games where someone's battered me from one end of the pitch to the other for 90 minutes," he said.

He started his career at Nottingham Forest but was homesick and returned to the North with Bolton Wanderers, for whom he made his debut in 1982 against Rotherham United. "I'll never forget that match," he said. "I accidentally kicked Gerry Gow of all people and he said to me, 'do that again and I'll break your nose!'"

His father, Brian, had also been a professional footballer, turning out as a winger for a clutch of northern lower league teams and it looked for a while as if Neil would emulate him, as he joined Lincoln City and Doncaster Rovers. "We used to have to ring the bank at Doncaster and make sure we'd been paid. It upsets me to see that they are in trouble again at the moment," he said. "I think it is important to the game that smaller clubs survive."

Although, by his own admission, he is short of pace, Redfearn reached a higher level with Crystal Palace and Watford and, in 1989, was an integral part of the enterprising Oldham Athletic team built by Joe Royle. He played in the centre of midfield during Oldham's promotion to the top flight in 1990-91 and scored 14 league goals.

The summer of 1991 in Oldham was much like the summer of 1997 in Barnsley. Camera crews descended on an allegedly grim northern town and the euphoria was intense. During that close season, Royle had a quiet but devastating word with Redfearn.

"He told me he wanted to play me on the right of midfield," Redfearn recalled. "I felt I'd more than earned my right to play my own position. I'd always seen Joe like a father figure, but it felt like he had kicked me in the teeth." After taking Oldham to the top, Redfearn was to play no part in their glory and left to join Barnsley, who were then bottom of the old second division with just one point from seven games. "It meant a lot to me to play for a Yorkshire club. I felt I could relate to their supporters," he said.

Last season, Barnsley played joyous, unfettered football and their promotion was greeted by universal acclaim. "We had no fear at all. If we went 3-0 down, we just assumed we'd come back and score four," Redfearn said. "When we came up it was like a shot in the arm for the working man and I think most people want us to stay up."

Unfortunately, Barnsley's progressive football has not been a success in the Premiership. Their defence has remained generous, but this has not been reciprocated by opponents. The philosophy of optimism instilled by Danny Wilson, the manager, has not perished entirely, however. "Even when we were seven goals down against United [Manchester], the other week, I kept thinking, if we could get a goal or two we might have a mini revival and make it 7-4 or something," Redfearn said.

Barnsley's one surprise result of the season was a 1-0 win against Liverpool at Anfield two weeks ago. Redfearn believes this owed much to a masterful piece of brinkmanship by Wilson. He organised the trip to Anfield four days before the match so that the players could see Liverpool take on Grimsby Town in the Coca-Cola Cup. Liverpool might well have been exhilarating and made Barnsley apprehensive but, as Wilson had expected, they were ordinary, despite a 3-0 victory, and the Barnsley squad left Merseyside unusually confident.

> 'It meant a lot to me to play for a Yorkshire club. I felt I could relate to the fans'

Redfearn is steeped in football. From the age of seven he has been professionally coached. Talking about the game comes as naturally as playing it. He is interrupted several times by hotel staff proferring opinions on Barnsley's struggle. He looks them in the eye, listens to their comments and counters with his own.

As we leave, after all this free, unguarded conversation, he delivers a sting — except it is not a sting at all. "Margaret reckons I'd be good on things like *A Question of Sport* and doing stuff like this all helps, I suppose," he says. A question of integrity might well be more appropriate.

FA Cup minnows Wisbech ready to take bite out of big fish

Keith Pike visits a Cambridgeshire team with an appetite for success in their tie with Bristol Rovers

Childs: managing role

It was cold enough to add antifreeze to the half-time Bovril and had they been able to commandeer a gritting lorry for the journey back over the Cambridgeshire border, the players of Wisbech Town would still not have felt immune from the winter chill of defeat. On Wednesday night, one door to Wembley had closed; today, another is springloaded and ready to slam in their faces.

Of all the small fry in the big FA Cup pond this afternoon, Wisbech are the real tiddlers. Tenth in the Dr Martens League Midland division, their opponents are Bristol Rovers, of the Nationwide League second division — the exact equivalent, in terms of their respective places in the football pyramid, of Doncaster Rovers against Manchester United.

If Rovers had sent a spy to Raunds Town for Wisbech's FA Umbro Trophy third qualifying round replay on Wednesday, they would have seen a team that mixes a neat, passing game with commendable commitment, but with an attack led by a 39-year-old storeman and a 22-year-old university student as last line of defence. They would have seen Andy Moore, the man-mountain of a captain, thunderously head the decisive goal in a 3-2 extra-time defeat past his own goalkeeper. And they would have licked their lips as they envisaged a goal-hungry romp into the third round. It would, indeed, be a shock to rival most in the competition's history if Wisbech were to prevail today. This tie, though, is not so much about a non-league club attempting to create history as about one with the chance to overwrite it.

In the 40 years since their only previous appearance at this stage, a 2-1 defeat away to Reading, Wisbech's footballing claims to fame — they were twice beaten in the semi-finals of the FA Vase in the mid-Eighties, the second time falling foul of Les Ferdinand's prowess for Southall — have been overshadowed by off-field notoriety.

In 1970, they captured a few headlines when their manager decided that the best way for his players to relax on the eve of a game was to take them to a strip-tease show. Worse was to follow. Much worse. Two years ago, Wisbech suffered the humiliation of being suspended by the Jewson Eastern Counties League. Their crime? Offering insufficient hospitality to visiting officials. Specifically, they had not been able to come up with a plate of sandwiches and a pot of tea. That incident and others led to an emergency shareholders' meeting 20 months ago at which a new chairman, Eddie Anderson, a new board and a new sense of direction were put in place, and if it is understandable that the present regime has no desire to revisit the past — "It was a huge embarrassment. Now we are only interested in looking ahead," John Petch, the secretary, said — a slice of Cup glory would go a long way towards erasing such memories for a club perhaps overdue a bit of luck.

Charged with masterminding that bid is Gary Childs, appointed in September when the club decided that a full-time player-manager would expedite their ambitions of a place in the Vauxhall Conference. Childs inherited from Ian Jones a team that had blazed to promotion from the Jewson League with 141 goals. Peter Munns and Ian Williams, two 25-year-old sales reps, bagged 47 and 34 respectively and Jackie Gallagher — he who will be 40 in April, — scored 29. "It is not a foregone conclusion that we will get beaten," Childs, the former Walsall and Grimsby Town midfield player, said. "We have got some good players, a great spirit, and there will be 4,000 at Fenland Park shouting their heads off." There might also be free sandwiches all round if they win.

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FOOTBALL SATURDAY

30 years of Hurst . . . but now he thinks it could be all over

World at his feet: Hurst secures his place in history with his third goal against West Germany at Wembley in 1966

OLIVER HOLT

They had spoken for a few minutes at the small party in a former library near the old port in Marseilles, but when the middle-aged man in his favourite blue Harrods overcoat left with the delegation from England's campaign to stage the 2006 World Cup, Alan Shearer stopped eating his lamb cassoulet and followed the departing figure with his eyes.

Like a ghost of glories past and the spirit of what might be, the presence of Geoff Hurst in the South of France in the days leading up to the draw for the World Cup finals next summer, was a reminder of the momentous nature of the events that lie in store for Shearer and the rest of the England team.

Hurst represents the absolute best-case scenario, the man who produced the ultimate striker's performance in the ultimate football match, the World Cup final. In the course of one afternoon at Wembley in 1966, he ensured that he became a sporting icon, an enduringly powerful symbol of national pride and success.

That England team, but Hurst in particular, is the fondest image that bursts into the footballing minds of the nation every four years as World Cup time comes around. The television pictures and the commentary surrounding his goals are integral parts even of late Nineties English culture, evidenced by the furore last year over the return of the hat-trick ball from Germany and the creation of a quiz show called *They Think It's All Over*.

For Hurst and the rest of the survivors of that team, the intervening decades have been anything but 30 years of hurt. Instead, they have been years of being revered as the best team England have ever produced, years of a constant stream of well-wishers approaching them and telling them they provided them with one of the happiest days of their life when they beat Germany that July day 31 years ago.

Hurst is a successful businessman today, who is not weighed down by his past glories

In Marseilles, though, Hurst admitted that hints of ambiguity surround his patriotic desire to see England emulate the Boys of '66 in France next summer. He believes that England should reach the semi-finals at least and that this time, having created a squad spirit that has echoes of that forged by Sir Alf Ramsey, Glenn Hoddle's side is capable of winning the tournament.

If that happens, though, Hurst realises that the nation will have a new set of footballing heroes to acclaim. "There would be some feeling in me," he said, "that if England were to win the World Cup again it woud take away some of the glory of '66. No question.

"I think one of the reasons that people still come up to me and are still very kind is that there is a whole generation still clinging on to that. The youngsters have not seen that. If we did it again, I feel we would fade a bit in the past, but what would be wonderful would be for another generation to have the feeling that the older generation had when we won it."

"Our achievements might pale a bit, I suppose. But for a lot of people of our generation, it was their day, something that they still connect with and that will never change. Anybody who was more than ten years old on that day still remembers where they were. I do not think you would take that feeling from them if this England team won in France and they would still generate it towards me as a person who was involved in it."

Hurst, though, is a genial, upbeat and positive man who is the antithesis of a former player existing on former glories. He is a successful businessman, a leading part of a multinational insurance-broking firm and along with Sir Bobby Charlton and Gary Lineker, he is devoting much of his energy to championing England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup.

Nor is he weighed down by his past. Far from his hat-trick condemning the rest of his life to lingering anticlimax, he believes it was the beginning of everything good that has happened to him since.

"That day, I think, was the starting point in many respects," Hurst said. "You could argue that, from a professional point of view, once you have scored a hat-trick in the World Cup final, you are not going to do any better. I could have retired on August 1, 1966 and been quite satisfied with my career. People still look on my career as if it was one game, although I did actually have a reasonable career.

"But everything I do today and am involved in today, everything that affects my life today, is as a result of that memorable afternoon. It has affected my life in a very positive way. When you have scored three goals in a World Cup final, you do not really feel as though you have got anything to prove to anybody.

"When you are involved in a major success for your country people look very kindly on you for that and the memory of that World Cup win seems to be getting stronger. It is maturing like a wine.

"In 1975, I went on a trip to Hong Kong as a guest of British American Tobacco to present some football prizes. It was first-class travel and a very enjoyable trip. When I got back, I remember saying to my wife, 'these days are going to stop, it is ten years ago now and it is going to fade away'. Well, here we are just a wee bit later and it is all stronger than it has ever been.

"The pleasure of being recognised for scoring that hat-trick never wears off. I still enjoy it. I enjoy people's reactions when they have waited 30-odd years to tell me where they were and to say it was the greatest day of their life. I get a lot of enjoyment out of that. A lot of fulfilment from that."

> 'People still look on my career as if it was just that game'

For the England players who might be allowing themselves to contemplate winning the tournament next summer, Hurst said his overriding emotion when the final whistle went at Wembley 31 years ago, the feeling he remembers most about winning the World Cup, was the sense of relief that flooded over him.

He can still talk you through every thought that was going through his head just before he scored his third goal. Desperately tired, the limit of his ambition was to give the ball-boy some more work and waste a few precious seconds. "But as you know," he said, "I mis-hit it and it flew in."

And his ideal outcome in the World Cup final in Paris next July? His answer, delivered with a smile, is worthy of Solomon. "It would be nice if we got to the final, beat the Germans four to nothing . . . and the two strikers scored two each. Yeah, that would be good."

Chile pencilled in for Wembley

By Russell Kempson

AFTER the pomp and ceremony of the draw for the World Cup finals in Marseilles on Thursday, Football Association officials yesterday got down to the serious business of finalising England's five-match warm-up programme before they travel to France again next year. Chile, one of the South American qualifers for the sport's greatest showpiece, have been pencilled in for Wembley on February 11.

Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, had originally agreed to an international match against Colombia on that date but after the draw, which brought together Romania, England, Colombia and Tunisia in group G, the game was called off. "It had not been officially announced, anyway," an FA spokesman said yesterday. "The Colombians were quick to say that they didn't want to play us any more, once the draw had been made, so that was that. As yet, nothing else has been confirmed."

Hoddle is keen that at least one of England's five fixtures should be against South American opposition. It is also believed that the FA has provisionally accepted an invitation to play the United States in Washington on March 24 or 25 and may also be considering an offer to take on Croatia in Zagreb.

Faustino Asprilla, the Colombia and Newcastle United striker, has tipped England to win the World Cup. "The England lads have been joking with me all morning," Asprilla said, after training with Newcastle yesterday. "They have said Colombia haven't got a chance. I've told them they will only be there in France for a week and then out.

"Seriously, though, England are obviously the group favourites. Their problems are not Colombia, it will be Romania or Tunisia. Alan Shearer is a magnificent player. He will score a lot of goals and cause problems for our defenders. He is the strong base of the England team. I'm not afraid of anyone in that side but we've got to respect some — most important of all is Shearer."

The Colombian people "watch football from England all the time now," Asprilla said. "People know about the country and its football as they watch it on satellite television and now follow it. And they know how difficult it will be for us against them."

Asprilla feels his country have a huge point to prove — they were very disappointing in the last World Cup when they were knocked out in the first round. "For all Colombia, this is very important. And it is also important to us that our last group game is against England.

"We want to show ourselves, we haven't done ourselves justice in the World Cup up until now. It was very sad to go out in the first round the last time around. Colombia are a very nice team. All the players are very good players — not only me." Hoddle fears the frustration factor could be the biggest threat to his dreams of World Cup glory. He was far from displeased at the prospect of taking on the very different problems posed by the unknowns of Tunisia, the ageing Romanians and the volatile Colombians.

But the scheduling of the matches in group G means England will not be kicking off their bid for the crown until five days after defending champions Brazil have faced Scotland in the opening match. And for Hoddle, that spells a potential problem to be overcome.

"I'm not too happy about having to wait that long," Hoddle said. "I'd have preferred for us to get under way a lot quicker. The lads will be sitting in the hotel and watching plenty of other games on television but what they'll want to be doing is getting on with it, and that's where the waiting will be hard."

Venables denies Portsmouth resignation

Nationwide
FOOTBALL LEAGUE

LIFE is never dull when Terry Venables is about — as Portsmouth again found to their cost yesterday (Russell Kempson writes). In the morning, it was reported that Venables, the Portsmouth chairman, had resigned; in the afternoon, doubts were expressed about the validity of the stories; in the evening, he denied that he had left.

As preparations go, for Portsmouth's Nationwide League first division game against Stoke City at Fratton Park this afternoon, they were not the best. In addition, the players are still waiting for last month's wages. Fifty per cent has been paid by the Professional Footballers' Association and the club is now expected to match the payment. Rumours of Venables's departure surfaced early on. Terry Fenwick, the Portsmouth manager, read a brief message from Venables to the players, which said that Venables had left the club.

It was also revealed that the 51 per cent shareholding he had apparently bought for £1 eight months ago had still not been transferred into his name. Martin Gregory, the club owner, had consequently withdrawn the offer of a further 47 per cent shareholding, which was to have been purchased for about £3 million within three years.

However, Venables later said that reports of his departure were premature. "As of now, I'm still the chairman of the club until such time as I choose different," he said. "I expect to make a decision on my future at the club by the end of the weekend. I am going to consider my position; I don't want to jump into something I might regret. The club's financial crisis has been solved; you can talk to the bank."

Ukrainians take a dim view when Russia gets Kiev's just deserts

Off the line
by Russell Kempson

ENGLISH journalists should perhaps be a tad careful when covering Newcastle United's final European Cup Champions' League match against Dynamo Kiev next week. After Dynamo's impressive 3-0 home victory against Barcelona, one national newspaper scribe was taken to task for having described the game as a "mauling in Russia".

Mykola Kravchenko, first secretary for press and cultural affairs at the Embassy of Ukraine in London, was not amused. "Dynamo has never been a Russian club, even at the times when Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union," he wrote, in a fierce missive to the paper's editor.

"Dynamo is known in the football world as a Ukrainian club which scored more success than any other club of the former USSR had ever managed to attain. Today, geographically dyslexic reporting poses a danger of hurting millions of Dynamo's supporters in Ukraine who feel themselves stripped of a deserved victory with a stroke of a pen." So there.

Ticket to ride

Managers and their backroom staff leave clubs for a variety of reasons but none stranger, surely, than that surrounding the departure of Adrian Piggon, the No 2 with Bedworth United, the Dr Martens League Midland division club. Piggon asked for more than the usual one complimentary ticket for the home game against Hinckley United, but when the board refused his request he promptly walked out.

Simon Haworth, the Coventry City striker, got bored one day so he went out and bought five goldfish — or at least he thought he did — to provide some excitement in the Haworth household. "I went off to Belgium with the Wales team but when I got back home there were only four fish in the tank," he said. "I reckon one of them's a piranha."

Gallows humour

Life's a bitch at Oxford United at the moment — £10 million in debt, new stadium on hold, every player up for sale — but at least Mike Ford, the United defender, has retained a sense of humour. "Someone turned up late for training the other day and we thought he'd been sold," he said, "but he just got stuck in the traffic."

STRANGE BUT TRUE: Northwich Victoria boast the most venerable football terrace in the world, the 120-year-old Danebank at Drill Field. It was recently reopened after a £50,000 facelift.

Beggar's gain

Nobody felt more over the moon about Iran's unexpected World Cup qualifying victory against Australia last weekend than Syed Hossein, a beggar on the streets of Tehran. Business had never been so good. "It's been a great day for me," Hossein reflected. "I've earned 100,000 rials (£20) in just half an hour. People are so happy that they're just tossing money at me." Good on yer, Syed. Let's party.

Harford completes move

By Russell Kempson

WEST Bromwich Albion and Queens Park Rangers might not have exactly kissed and made up yesterday, but they at least reached a civilised agreement over the services of Ray Harford. West Bromwich accepted that Harford, their manager, wanted to leave The Hawthorns for Loftus Road and, after the threat of legal action had been lifted, all parties appeared happy with the outcome.

Harford has taken charge of the Rangers side and will lead them in their home game against Sunderland in the Nationwide League first division this afternoon. John Hollins, who has been in charge of the side since Stewart Houston and Bruce Rioch were dismissed last month, has been offered the position of Harford's assistant.

West Bromwich had been prepared to take the matter to court. Tony Hale, the chairman, claimed that Harford had failed to give the club the six-month notice period required for his resignation, which he announced late on Wednesday. After talks between the clubs before the scheduled hearing in the High Court yesterday, an "amicable agreement" was reached.

"When we decided on taking legal action, we acted in the interests of this football club," John Wile, the West Bromwich chief executive, said. "It is absolutely wrong for a club to poach another club's manager, especially when we had bent over backwards to help Ray with support and money. It is wrong that, through no fault of our own, we should be put in a position where we could suffer incalculable damage."

Jamie Stuart, 21, the Charlton Athletic defender, is to be charged with misconduct by the Football Association after failing a drugs test. Stuart tested positive for cocaine and marijuana when the FA's drugs control unit visited the first division club's training ground on November 17.

Stuart is the third player to fail a drugs test this season after the cases of Dean Jones, of Barnsley, and Shane Nicholson, of West Bromwich.

FOOTBALL SATURDAY

LIVERPOOL
v
MANCHESTER UNITED
Today, 11.15 (sold out)

Oliver Holt

This match may not be quite as seminal as the corresponding fixture towards the end of last season when Manchester United tore Liverpool apart at Anfield and condemned them to a late spell of mediocrity which robbed them of a European Cup Champions' League place, but the FA Carling Premiership game on Merseyside today could be pivotal in the race for the title.

After the trauma of their defeat by Barnsley in their last match at Anfield a fortnight ago, Liverpool salvaged some pride — and suggested that a challenge on United's supremacy might still be feasible — with an untypically gritty 1-0 win over Arsenal at Highbury last Sunday, courtesy of a sublime goal from Steve McManaman.

That surprise victory confirmed the trend of a Liverpool season that has swung crazily from highs to lows.

It also means that a win over Alex Ferguson's team would bring them within striking distance of United and stifle some of the cries for the replacement of Roy Evans, the beleaguered Liverpool manager, who almost certainly will be eased out of his job at the end of the season if Liverpool fail to win the title.

Before the Arsenal game, Jamie Redknapp, the Liverpool midfield player, one of their best at Highbury in the absence of Paul Ince, his usual central partner, said his team needed a minimum of four points from the two games in London and Liverpool. They are three-quarters of the way there.

That fourth point, though, may be the hardest to win. United are in formidable form and the way they disposed of Blackburn Rovers at Old Trafford last Sunday, suggests they will be in no mood to encourage any belated title aspirations taking root on Merseyside.

The absence of Ince and Robbie Fowler, both suspended, from the Liverpool line-up will weigh in their favour, too.

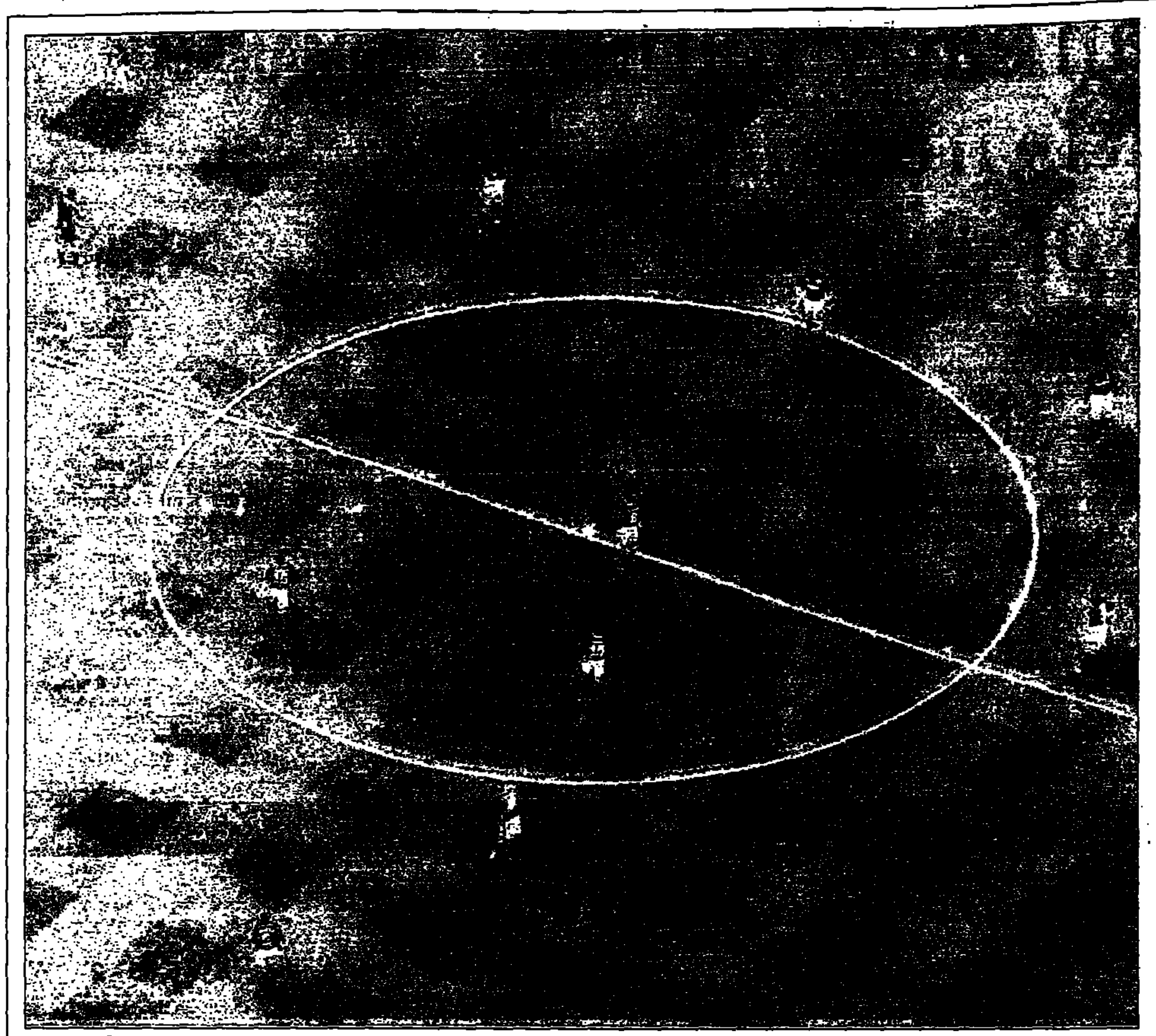
United will be without Paul Scholes, but Ferguson actually gave thanks for that after the victory over Blackburn, saying that it would ease a selection dilemma that is already assuming significant proportions.

His main problem is the attacking permutation now that Teddy Sheringham, Andy Cole and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer are all scoring goals regularly.

That could swing things United's way, but Liverpool may salvage something from a game that will have all the fervent atmosphere of a derby.

LIVERPOOL (probable; 4-4-2): D James — R Jones, B T Kvarme, M Wright, D Matteo — S McManaman, J Redknapp, J Carragher, S I Bjornebye — M Owen, K Riedle.
MANCHESTER UNITED (4-3-1-2): P Schmeichel — G Neville, G Pallister, H Berg, P Neville — D Beckham, N Butt, R Giggs — E Sheringham — A Cole, O G Solskjaer.
Referee: D Elleray

■ TELEVISION: Today: Live on Sky Sports 1, from 10.30am, and on *Match of the Day* (extended highlights).
■ PREDICTION: Honours even.



Centre of attention: the teams prepare for the big kick-off, but at what time is anybody's guess. Photograph: John Gichigi/Allsport

FIRST 11 ELEVEN

SIGN OF THE TIMES

It's Liverpool v Manchester United today, which can only mean one thing — a truly surreal kick-off time. 11.15am is the chosen time for the Red Armies to meet this season. Here are some other kick-off times to conjure with.

1. 7.30, Wednesday evening
Unless stated, of course . .

2. 7.45, Wednesday evening
. which it usually is

3. 12, midday
Useful for newspapers to use "high-noon showdown" headlines

4. 8.00, Monday evening
Oh goody, it's Leicester v Wimbledon tonight

5. 1.00, Sunday afternoon
It used to be roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, now it's more likely to be Cardiff v Swansea

6. 3.05, Sunday afternoon
Usually just after the Queen Vic has closed

7. 4.00, Sunday afternoon
Arsenal v Man U if you've got Sky The Dambusters *if you haven't*

8. 2.00, Saturday afternoon
For clubs who object to lunchtime drinking

9. 5.30, Saturday evening
Even England v Cameroon is better than Are You Being Served? *. . . but only just*

10. 6.00, Boxing Day evening
Known as the cold turkey treatment

11. 3.00, Saturday afternoon
Don't be ridiculous, that will never catch on

Compiled by Richard Whitehead

LEEDS UNITED
v
EVERTON
Today, 3.0

Simon Wilde

Which side of their beds will the Leeds United players get out of this morning? It may be the most meaningful clue as to how the FA Carling Premiership's most enigmatic side performs at Elland Road this afternoon. Of late, they have been profligate and parsimonious, dull and dynamic, sweet and sour — never the same from one week to the next, except in their ability to fashion the right result, usually at the last, lung-bursting gasp.

They have won their past four premiership matches, the last three after going 0-3, 0-1 and 0-2 down against Derby County, West Ham United and Barnsley respectively. The more frequent these heroics, the harder it is to dismiss them as messy flukes.

Even George Graham, the Leeds manager, has admitted not always knowing what his players are about, but he knew enough to agree this week to stick with the club until the end of the century (for adequate remuneration, of course). He must be missing the predictability of those asphyxiatingly efficient performances of old, but perhaps he is as intrigued as everyone else by his side's unconquerable spirit.

How long can it last? Leeds, who might have been content this season to rebuild, now lie an improbable fourth in the table, and with the visitors being lowly Everton, beaten in their past five matches and without a win away from home in the premiership this year, it is tempting to envisage Leeds, for once, doing the crushingly obvious and taking them to the cleaners.

However, Leeds will need to avoid vertigo — and there are doubts over Lucas Radebe and Harry Kewell. Radebe, who flies to Johannesburg tonight for South Africa's international against Brazil tomorrow, has a groin strain and Kewell has a damaged knee. Hopkin is under suspension.

If Everton do lose again, further displays of disenchantment from their supporters are assured. Peter Johnson, the chairman, is in their sights.

LEEDS UNITED (possible; 4-4-2): N Martyn — G Halle, D Wetherall, L Radebe, D Robertson — G Kelly, L Bowyer, A I Haaland, B Ribeiro — J F Hasselbaink, R Wallace.
EVERTON (possible, 5-3-2): N Southall — E Barrett, T Thomas, C Tiler, C Short, A Hinchcliffe — M. Ward, D Williamson, G Speed — D Cadamarteri, D Ferguson.
Referee: P Durkin

■ TELEVISION: Today: *Match of the Day*, BBC1 10.50pm, goal highlights.
■ PREDICTION: Leeds to grind out unexpectedly dull win.

ASTON VILLA
v
COVENTRY CITY
Today, 3.0

Russell Kempson

Aston Villa are looking for a band — drummers, trumpeters, trombonists, the more the better — to stoke up the atmosphere during their Uefa Cup third round, second leg tie against Steaua Bucharest on Tuesday. The plan, apparently, is to scare the Steaua players into submission.

No need for such fanfare today. Coventry City were so excruciatingly awful in the 2-0 defeat by Leicester City last weekend, and will be without Gary McAllister, their influential captain, this afternoon, that Villa are unlikely to need any outside assistance. McAllister is injured, Willie Boland is suspended and Coventry have never won at Villa Park, either. It does not bode well for them.

"We're still upbeat and I hope our fans will be, too," Gordon Strachan, the Coventry manager, said. "We need that spirit behind us, that relegation spirit if you like. Maybe this season we need it a bit earlier."

Even with patchy league form, one eye on the game on Tuesday and the fact that Stan Collymore, the £7 million man, is still barely able to raise a sweat, Villa should win at a canter. No reason to get carried away, though; Steaua await around the corner and are unlikely to be intimidated by a bunch of musicians.

ASTON VILLA (possible; 3-4-1-2): M Bosnich — U Ehiogu, S Staunton, G Southgate — F Nelson, M Draper, S Grayson, A Wright — D Yorke — S Collymore, S Milosevic
COVENTRY CITY (probable, 4-4-2): S Ogrizovic — R Nilsson, R Shaw, G Breen, D Burrows — P Telfer, T E Soltvedt, P Williams, M Hall — D Huckerby, D Dublin.
Referee: G Barber

■ TELEVISION: Today: *Match of the Day*, goal highlights.
■ PREDICTION: Easy for Villa.

BLACKBURN ROVERS
v
BOLTON WANDERERS
Today, 3.0

Peter Robinson

Were you to mill around Ewood Park this afternoon, drinking in the atmosphere before the visit of Bolton Wanderers, one name would flash before your eyes again and again and again. Hendry. Emblazoned on the back of replica Rovers shirts as far as the eye can see.

Colin Hendry, you see, is the big thing in these parts, not so much popular as revered. As Le Tissier is to Southampton, as Shearer is to Newcastle United, so Hendry is to Blackburn, the undisputed fans' favourite — and how they have missed him. Still, a month to the day after sustaining a back injury in a 1-1 draw with Barnsley, the inspirational Scotland defender returns today at the expense of Pedersen. The experiment with 4-5-1 is likely to be ditched, too, after last week's humbling at Old Trafford, so Gallacher should resume up front alongside Sutton.

Bolton would do well not to read too much into that 4-0 defeat by Manchester United. Blackburn are better than that and will want to prove it, testing Wanderers' recent record of three successive clean sheets. Although Taggart is available after suspension and Fairclough and Cox have shrugged off injuries, the visitors' back four is likely to be unchanged.

BLACKBURN ROVERS (probable; 4-4-2): T Flowers — J Kenna, S Henchoz, C Hendry, G Croft — S Ripley, G Flitcroft, T Sherwood, J Wilcox — K Gallacher, C Sutton.
BOLTON WANDERERS (probable; 4-4-2): K Branagan — G Bergsson, A Todd, M Fish, M Whitlow — J Pollock, P Frandsen, A Thompson, S Sellars — N Blake, D Holdsworth.
Referee: M Bodenham.

■ TELEVISION: Today: *Match of the Day*, goal highlights.
■ PREDICTION: It is a derby, so only a tentative home win.

DERBY COUNTY
v
WEST HAM UNITED
Today, 3.0

Richard Hobson

This should be one of the easier weekend fixtures to call. Derby County are unbeaten in the FA Carling Premiership at Pride Park while West Ham United have yet to enjoy victory on their travels. A routine home win? Not necessarily.

The Derby defence has been increasingly jittery and even the sight of John Hartson, the West Ham striker, taking a pre-match stroll on the pitch, may induce panic among the ranks. Thus, Jim Smith, the manager, is considering restoring Stimac, a comforting presence, to the back three, even though he is not convinced that the Croatia international has recovered fully from a back problem.

Burton, the Jamaica forward, replaced Ronaldo in the exhibition match that preceded the World Cup draw in Marseilles on Thursday and will start this afternoon if Smith feels the time has come to rest the extraordinary Wanchope.

For West Ham, Lampard is in contention after a virus kept him out of the midweek win against Crystal Palace — a game in which Hartson notched his seventeenth goal in 20 games. Arsène Wenger said the next day that he had no regrets in allowing him to leave Arsenal — surely the extreme of bloody-mindedness.

DERBY COUNTY (possible; 3-4-1-2): M Poom — G Rowett, I Stimac, C Dailly — R Kozluk, S Eranio, L Carsley, C Powell — F Baiano — D Sturridge, P Wanchope.
WEST HAM UNITED (possible; 5-2-1-2): C Forrest — T Breacker, I Pearce, R Ferdinand, D Unsworth, S Lazaridis — F Lampard, S Lomas — E Berkovic — J Hartson, S Abou
Referee: A Wilkie

■ TELEVISION: Today: *Match of the Day*, goal highlights.
■ PREDICTION: *West Ham to reverse the trend in an open game.*

LEICESTER CITY
v
CRYSTAL PALACE
Today, 3.0

Nick Szczepanik

Until Crystal Palace's 4-1 hammering at Upton Park on Wednesday night, watched by Roberto Bettega, vice-president of potential investors, Juventus, the story of their season had been, their excellent away form: but if results on their travels start to go the way of their dire home record, Palace could begin to fulfil pre-season predictions of a struggle.

However, an early opportunity to relaunch the road campaign presents itself at Filbert Street today, despite injuries to Jamie Smith, Andy Roberts and Bruce Dyer.

Although they are sixth in the FA Carling Premiership, Leicester City do not possess a Hartson or a Berkovic (Palace's chief tormentors at West Ham), and also have found goals hard to come by at home recently. This will not be helped by the absence of Emile Heskey, who completes a three-match suspension.

It also may explain why Martin O'Neill, the manager, natural worrier that he is, prefers to think of his team as fourteenth from bottom. "My daughter summed it up best when she said that we were only a point behind Arsenal," he said. "I have to admit that I still look down to the gap between ourselves and the bottom three." But not, surely, as often as Palace do.

LEICESTER CITY (probable; 3-5-2): K Keller — S Prior, M Elliott, S Walsh — P Kaamark, R Savage, N Lennon, M Izzet, S Guppy — I Marshall, G Fenton.
CRYSTAL PALACE (possible; 3-5-2): K Miller — A Linighan, P Warhurst, H Hreidarsson — M Edworthy, I Zohar, N Emblen, S Rodger, D Gordon — M Padovano, N Shipperley
Referee: U Rennie.

■ TELEVISION: Today: *Match of the Day*, goal highlights.
■ PREDICTION: Low-scoring draw

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR
v
CHELSEA
Today, 3.0 (sold out)

Matt Dickinson

There was a time not so long ago when this fixture would have resembled the farcical Europe versus the Rest of the World curtain-raiser to the World Cup draw last Thursday: two talented teams with insufficient direction helping each other to score goals. Probably no tackling either.

Not so nowadays, of course, with Chelsea hoping to assert themselves as Manchester United's most credible challengers in the FA Carling Premiership and a Tottenham Hotspur team, a corpse under Gerry Francis, showing the first signs of life under Christian Gross's spartan regime.

Chelsea must show their mettle on this sort of occasion. Like United, they can rest some of their best players because of the depth of their squad. Like the champions, they have thrived despite losing their most dynamic midfield player because of a cruciate ligament injury. Remember Roy Keane and Gustavo Poyet?

The 4-0 victory over Derby County last week suggests that Chelsea may be close to their peak. They will not be short of confidence at White Hart Lane. "August 1987: that was the last time we beat Chelsea at home," Gross, the Tottenham coach, ever meticulous, said yesterday.

Gross will hope that a bonding session in a hotel last night will build on the morale gained by victory over Everton, but their preparations could be undermined by a shoulder injury to Sol Campbell who is doubtful. Anderton may replace Fox in the starting line-up.

Ruud Gullit, the Chelsea manager, may break with his policy of rotating strikers and stick with Mark Hughes who is about to begin a three-match suspension, rather than bring in Gianluca Vialli.

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR (probable; 4-4-2): I Walker — S Carr, R Vega, S Campbell, C Wilson — D Anderton, C Calderwood, A Nielsen, A Sinton — D Ginola, L Ferdinand.
CHELSEA (probable; 4-4-2): E de Goey — F Sinclair, F Leboeuf, M Duberry, C Babayaro — D Petrescu, D Wise, R Di Matteo, G Le Saux — G Zola, M Hughes.
Referee: D Gallagher

■ TELEVISION: Today: *Match of the Day*, extended highlights.
■ PREDICTION: Chelsea to pinch a hard-fought win.

ON MONDAY

Brilliant insights or hopeless guesses? Check our writers' predictions against their weekend match reports

NEWCASTLE UNITED
v
ARSENAL
Today, 3.0 (sold out)

David Maddock

Just how complicated is Kenny Dalglish? At his press conference yesterday, the Newcastle United manager indicated that Faustino Asprilla may be ready to return to action after a two-month lay-off, following a hernia operation.

Consternation. The assembled media representatives were thrown into confusion because Dalglish is never so straightforward as to actually give out important information such as players' fitness.

After much deliberation, the consensus among the hard-bitten press men was that Dalglish was bluffing. He would only say that Asprilla could play, they mused, if in fact the Colombian striker were still unfit.

It is a mark of the complexity of the Newcastle manager that such an inquest took place. He rarely does anything without a purpose, and the chances are that Asprilla probably will start the FA Carling Premiership match against Arsenal at St James' Park today on the bench, getting a taste of the action at some stage.

His return will be welcomed by the many Newcastle supporters beginning to wonder just where their team is heading this season. Their departure from the European Cup Champions' League was followed quickly by defeat away to Bolton Wanderers and the stark realisation that perhaps the Magpies are not quite good enough to win the league this season.

That thought struck Arsène Wenger, about his own side, at the weekend. The Arsenal manager virtually gave up the ghost after Liverpool's victory at Highbury and suggested that Manchester United were unstoppable.

Many people thought that this was a ploy by Wenger to put pressure on United, but he is not as complicated as Dalglish. Wenger merely says things as he sees them, and he realised last weekend that Arsenal still have some way to go.

He will not be able to make many changes to the side that, he said, played so poorly. Vieira and Parlour are unfit, and Bould and Grimandi are — surprise, surprise — suspended. Both sides need to win, so it will be an interesting struggle.

NEWCASTLE UNITED (probable, 4-4-1-1). S Given — S Watson, D Peacock, S Pearce, A Pistone — K Gillespie, R Lee, D Batty, T Ketsbaia — J D Tomasson — J Barnes
ARSENAL (probable; 4-4-2) D Seaman — L Dixon, M Keown, A Adams, N Winterburn — S Hughes, E Petit, D Platt, M Overmars — I Wright, D Bergkamp
Referee: S Dunn

■ TELEVISION: Today: *Match of the Day*, extended highlights.
■ PREDICTION: Bore draw.

WIMBLEDON
v
SOUTHAMPTON
Tomorrow, 4.0

Brian Glanville

Wimbledon have been shipping water lately. Southampton, after an improved run, lost at home last weekend to Sheffield Wednesday. Neither can afford to lose this FA Carling Premiership game.

It remains to be seen whether Wimbledon's once-solid defence is as good as it was in the first half of their last home game, against Manchester United, or as bad as it was in the second, when it let in five goals.

The curse of Scotland goalkeepers seems to have descended on Neil Sullivan, who, picked on contentious grounds for Scotland, gave away a goal against France and gave away the winner when Wimbledon lost to Bolton Wanderers last week. Better times may be round the corner.

It may be profitable for Wimbledon to recall Robbie Earle, who has missed two matches, rather than to place an unwanted midfield burden on Neil Ardley, a winger by persuasion. Equally, this might be the moment to go with the new Norwegian midfield player, Stole Solbakken, who looked useful when he came on late against United. Efan Ekoku could be brought back to the attack, were Joe Kinnear, the manager, to prefer him to Marcus Gayle or the promising Carl Cort.

David Jones, a young manager of distinct promise, gradually has been making Southampton into a better side, although their finishing also has been something of a problem. However, David Hirst is finding the range and Egil Ostenstad, their Norway international striker, is back. Indeed, Ostenstad may replace Hirst this afternoon. Then there is Kevin Davies, bought from Chesterfield, in whose splendid FA Cup run he figured so impressively last season. Still only 20, quick, strong and incisive, he will score many goals.

There is also the eternal, gifted maverick, Matt Le Tissier, who can turn any game with an inspired pass, a remarkable goal. Yes, he still tends to drift in and out of matches. Yes, he should have headed that goal at Chelsea. But he is exquisitely capable of making the bullets for those fine strikers to fire.

WIMBLEDON (possible; 4-4-2): N Sullivan — K Cunningham, C Perry, D Blackwell, B Thatcher — N Ardley, V Jones, C Hughes, M Hughes — C Cort, M Gayle.
SOUTHAMPTON (possible; 4-3-1-2): P Jones — J Dodd, K Monkou, C Lundekvam, F Benali — C Palmer, K Richardson, M Oakley — M Le Tissier — K Davies, E Ostenstad.
Referee: M Reed.

■ TELEVISION: Tomorrow: Live on Sky Sports 1, from 3pm.
■ PREDICTION: A draw.

FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Why an early start detracts from the sense of occasion

McMANAMAN'S WORLD

A real sense of anticipation has built up around this morning's game against Manchester United, but there is only one word I would use to describe the 11.15 kick-off — crazy. Whatever the reasons, it is unnatural for a football match to start at that time, especially for the fans, who have to travel some distance to the ground, or work Saturday morning. I find it hard to accept that there was nothing that could be done to accommodate a more reasonable kick-off time.

It is no great hardship, but many players have a set routine and they are easily put out of their stride. For an afternoon game, 3pm is ideal because it gives time for food to be consumed properly and a sensible build-up to be followed. For an 11.15 start, we will have to be out of bed by 7 o'clock, where most players are stuck in the routine of going to bed late and sleeping in before a match.

Much worse than that, many players are superstitious and have to eat the same food before each match. That means that some of our squad will eat a meal of roast chicken, or steak, or pasta or whatever, at 7.30am.

We kicked off early against Manchester United last season and, even though it was a really important match — absolutely crucial, in fact, to both sides — the atmosphere was subdued. I felt that both sides got into their stride only when well into the game.

I am one of the lucky ones, because I am not superstitious — in fact, I can't bring myself to eat very much at breakfast time, so I will probably have some cereal and toast, and try to get my energy levels up by eating a decent meal the night before.

There is a reluctance between the players of both sides to build up the rivalry between the two clubs. The fact is, we are quite friendly. I know lots of the United players from England duty and, of course, Paul Ince played for them. He is very close to Ryan Giggs and there is a lot of friendliness.

However, I accept that there is an intense rivalry between the two sets of supporters. In many ways, this fixture has become even more passionate than the Merseyside derby for our fans. It is probably because United have dominated the league for the past few seasons.

In the past, Liverpool were in control and United took satisfaction from beating us. Now the boot is on the other foot and I suspect that has created a little bit of jealousy among our supporters, who were used to winning things.

I know I'm jealous — jealous in the sense that I desperately want to win things and United have done that in recent years. No matter what our fans think of them, they are an excellent team. We're chasing them and we want what they have got, but the only way to do that is to do well in the domestic league and qualify to play on the greater European stage. That means winning our matches, not just at Anfield today, but consistently throughout the season.

■ **It's a small world**

The World Cup draw threw up some interesting prospects for England. I wouldn't say that it was the hardest draw of all the groups, but then it would be pretty stupid to get carried away with it as well.

It almost seems a cliché to suggest it, but the teams that have made it to the finals have to be of a decent quality to get there. The other teams in our group will be no mugs and England will have to do well to get past them.

Colombia are a case in point. I remember the 1994 finals, when they were among the favourites to win the competition. There was a lot of money placed on them, but they then came unstuck in the opening group stages. They are an unpredictable side, but very dangerous opponents and we all know that, in Faustino Asprilla, they have a superb centre forward. He has shown in the FA Carling Premiership how deadly he can be and we know that we will have to watch him closely.

The good thing is that we know all about him, as we do about Petrescu, Dumitrescu and Popescu, of Romania, all of whom have played in the FA Carling Premiership. We also have the advantage of having played against the national side quite recently. We played Romania and Colombia before the European championship finals. We drew against both and they both looked capable opposition. In fact, I played one of my first games for England against Colombia.

It would be nice, of course, if I could play against them again in the World Cup finals, but that is too far ahead. Whoever makes it into the England squad will have to prove their worth over the months ahead.

■ **Thanks for the memory**

On Thursday, I was present at the unveiling of a tribute to Bill Shankly and the opening of the Liverpool Visitor Centre. It was a moving tribute to a great man. The Shankly era had long passed when I arrived at Anfield, but his presence is still there at the club. He was a great character and his spirit still touches everyone.

Roy Evans and Ronnie Moran worked under Bill and they say not only what a great manager he was, but a wonderful man, too. Most important of all, he produced results. He won promotion for Liverpool and established the club as one of the most successful in history. It is important to remember that tradition, even as football heads off into a completely different era. Shankly possessed a passion for Liverpool Football Club that should never be forgotten.

I received recently a tape by John Keith, a journalist who knew Shanks well, which sums up the great man. He has put together some of the many, many stories and anecdotes — the legend — that has built up around Shankly and it is very entertaining.

He was genuinely funny and had an astute football brain. The tapes have been very popular around Merseyside, because they tap into the essentials of the man. He was honest and down to earth and was loved by our supporters, who still talk about him now.

☐ Shanks For The Memory, *by John Keith, Mastersound, is available from outlets around Merseyside.*

STEVE McMANAMAN

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

(Last week's position in brackets)	Played	Points	Goal diff	Home					Away					Last 10 matches	Current streak
				W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	W-D-L	
1. MANCHESTER UTD [illegible]	16	34	+28	7	1	0	27	4	3	3	2	13	8	5-3-2	W2
2. CHELSEA (3)	16	31	+18	6	0	1	16	6	4	1	4	19	11	6-1-3	W2
3. BLACKBURN ROVERS (2)	16	30	+10	5	2	1	17	9	3	4	1	10	8	4-5-1	L1
4. LEEDS UTD (5)	16	29	+7	4	1	3	13	11	5	1	2	13	8	7-1-2	W4
5. ARSENAL [illegible]	16	27	+12	5	2	1	18	4	2	4	2	12	14	4-3-3	L2
6. LEICESTER CITY (7)	16	26	+7	3	4	2	11	8	4	1	2	10	6	4-3-3	W1
7. LIVERPOOL [illegible]	15	25	+12	5	0	2	18	6	2	4	2	8	8	5-2-3	W1
8. NEWCASTLE UTD (9)	14	24	0	5	2	1	12	9	2	1	3	6	9	4-3-3	L1
9. DERBY COUNTY [illegible]	15	23	+4	5	2	0	17	5	2	0	6	11	19	5-2-3	L1
10. WEST HAM UTD (15)	16	22	-2	6	0	1	16	6	1	1	7	8	20	4-0-6	W2
11. WIMBLEDON [illegible]	16	19	-3	2	2	5	10	14	3	2	2	8	7	4-2-4	L2
12. CRYSTAL PALACE (10)	16	19	-5	0	3	4	5	11	5	1	3	11	10	3-4-3	L2
13. BOLTON WANDERERS [illegible]	16	19	-9	3	4	1	5	3	1	3	4	7	18	3-4-3	W2
14. ASTON VILLA (12)	16	18	-7	3	1	3	8	12	2	2	5	8	11	3-3-4	L1
15. SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY [illegible]	16	18	-9	4	1	3	15	12	1	2	5	13	25	4-2-4	W3
16. COVENTRY CITY (13)	16	17	-8	2	6	1	10	10	1	2	4	3	11	1-6-3	L2
17. SOUTHAMPTON [illegible]	16	16	-6	4	1	4	15	13	1	0	6	5	13	4-1-5	L2
18. TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR (17)	16	16	-9	3	2	3	7	8	1	2	5	6	14	2-3-5	W1
19. BARNSLEY (19)	16	13	-29	2	1	5	8	18	2	0	6	6	25	2-1-7	L1
20. EVERTON (20)	16	12	-11	3	1	4	11	13	0	2	6	5	14	1-2-7	L5

ATTACK

	Goals scored	Avge
1. Manchester Utd	40	2.50
2. Chelsea	35	2.19
3. Arsenal	30	1.87
4. Derby	28	1.87
5. Sheffield Wed	28	1.75
6. Liverpool	26	1.73
7. Blackburn	27	1.69
8. Leeds	26	1.62
9. West Ham	24	1.50
10. Leicester	21	1.31
11. Newcastle	18	1.29
12. Southampton	20	1.25
13. Wimbledon	18	1.12
14. Aston Villa	16	1.00
=. Crystal Palace	16	1.00
=. Everton	16	1.00
17. Barnsley	14	0.87
18. Coventry	13	0.81
=. Tottenham	13	0.81
20. Bolton	12	0.75

SCORING TIMES

Goals per half	1st	2nd
Arsenal	19	11
Aston Villa	6	10
Barnsley	7	5
Blackburn	22	7
Bolton	6	6
Chelsea	16	19
Coventry	6	7
Crystal Palace	8	8
Derby	13	15
Everton	6	10
Leeds Utd	15	11
Leicester	8	13
Liverpool	6	20
Manchester Utd	17	23
Newcastle	9	9
Sheffield Wed	13	15
Southampton	7	13
Tottenham	6	7
West Ham	7	17
Wimbledon	5	13

SCORERS

	Goals
Hartson (West Ham)	11
Bergkamp (Arsenal)	10
Sutton (Blackburn)	10
Wright (Arsenal)	9
Baiano (Derby)	9
Cole (Manchester Utd)	8
Wallace (Leeds)	8
Carbone (Sheffield Wed)	7
Davies (Southampton)	7
Dublin (Coventry)	7
Gallacher (Blackburn)	7
Sheringham (Manchester Utd)	7
Zola (Chelsea)	7
Berkovic (West Ham)	6
Blake (Bolton)	6
Di Canio (Sheffield Wed)	6
Fowler (Liverpool)	6
Wanchope (Derby)	6

CAUTIONS

Cards issued	Yellow	Red
1. Everton	35	3
2. Leeds Utd	37	1
3. Arsenal	36	1
4. Bolton	31	3
=. Chelsea	31	3
6. Coventry	33	1
=. C Palace	33	1
8. West Ham	32	0
=. Derby	32	0
10. Blackburn	26	3
11. Sheffield Wed	26	2
12. Tottenham	26	1
13. Southampton	26	0
14. Liverpool	24	1
15. Manchester Utd*	25	0
=. Wimbledon	25	0
17. Barnsley	24	0
18. Newcastle	22	1
19. Leicester	19	1
20. Aston Villa	16	1

** red card downgraded to yellow*

REFEREES

	P	Cards issued Yellow	Red
1. M Reed	6	32	1
2. G Willard	8	37	3
3. S Dunn	6	26	1
4. P Durkin	10	42	2
5. D Elleray	8	33	1
6. U Rennie	9	36	0
7. G Ashby	8	31	1
8. G Barber	8	30	1
9. P Alcock	8	31	0
=. M Bodenham	8	31	0
11. G Poll	10	35	3
12. J Winter	10	33	2
13. N Barry	9	28	1
14. P Jones	8	23	2
15. M Riley	8	24	1
16. K Burge	8	23	0
17. D Gallagher	9	23	2
18. A Wilkie	9	22	2
19. S Lodge	9	19	0

DEFENCE

	Goals conceded	Avge
1. Manchester Utd	12	0.75
2. Leicester	14	0.87
3. Liverpool	14	0.93
4. Blackburn	17	1.06
=. Chelsea	17	1.06
6. Arsenal	18	1.12
7. Leeds	19	1.19
8. Newcastle	18	1.29
9. Bolton	21	1.31
=. Coventry	21	1.31
=. Crystal Palace	21	1.31
=. Wimbledon	21	1.31
13. Tottenham	22	1.37
14. Aston Villa	23	1.44
15. Derby	24	1.60
16. Southampton	26	1.62
=. West Ham	26	1.62
18. Everton	27	1.69
19. Sheffield Wed	37	2.31
20. Barnsley	43	2.69

CLEAN SHEETS

	Clean sheet	Failed to score
Arsenal	6	5
Aston Villa	4	6
Barnsley	3	6
Blackburn	7	3
Bolton	7	6
Chelsea	7	2
Coventry	5	7
Crystal Palace	4	5
Derby	3	4
Everton	3	7
Leeds Utd	4	6
Leicester	7	4
Liverpool	5	2
Manchester Utd	9	3
Newcastle	4	2
Sheffield Wed	4	1
Southampton	3	6
Tottenham	5	9
West Ham	1	3
Wimbledon	2	5

HOME

Attendance	Average	% full
Arsenal	37,998	99%
Aston Villa	35,925	91%
Barnsley	18,453	100%
Blackburn	23,952	76%
Bolton	24,003	96%
Chelsea	33,002	99%
Coventry	18,857	80%
Crystal Palace	22,725	86%
Derby	24,293	81%
Everton	35,577	89%
Leeds	34,982	87%
Leicester	20,225	94%
Liverpool	36,891	97%
Manchester Utd	55,129	98%
Newcastle	36,708	100%
Sheffield Wed	25,726	65%
Southampton	15,174	100%
Tottenham	26,196	79%
West Ham	24,977	96%
Wimbledon	17,010	65%

AWAY

Attendance	P	Average
Arsenal	8	29,169
Aston Villa	9	27,246
Barnsley	8	29,791
Blackburn	8	28,826
Bolton	8	22,016
Chelsea	9	30,247
Coventry	7	27,227
Crystal Palace	9	26,517
Derby	8	29,125
Everton	8	28,356
Leeds	8	23,278
Leicester	7	28,222
Liverpool	8	30,054
Manchester Utd	8	30,892
Newcastle	6	28,423
Sheffield Wed	8	28,773
Southampton	7	31,393
Tottenham	8	29,277
West Ham	9	29,358
Wimbledon	7	27,047

INTERNET

FA Premiership clubs' official websites	
Arsenal	www.arsenal.co.uk
Aston Villa	www.astonvilla-fc.co.uk
Barnsley	www.yorkshire-web.co.uk/blc/BFC.HTML
Blackburn	www.rovers.co.uk
Bolton	www.boltonwfc.co.uk
Chelsea	www.chelseafc.co.uk
Coventry	www.ccfc.co.uk
C Palace	www.cpfc.co.uk
Derby	—
Everton	evertonfc.merseyworld.com
Leeds	www.lufc.co.uk
Leicester	www.lcfc.co.uk
Liverpool	—
Man Utd	www.sky.co.uk/sports/manu
Newcastle	www.newcastle-utd.co.uk/nufc
Sheff Wed	—
Southampton	www.soton.ac.uk/~saints
Tottenham	www.spurs.co.uk
West Ham	www.westhamunited.co.uk
Wimbledon	—
FA Premiership	www.fa-carling.com

WEEKEND MATCHES

TODAY

*Kick-off 3.0 unless stated * denotes all-ticket*
Pools coupon numbers in brackets
In Premiership fixtures, † denotes sold out, otherwise seats available

FA Carling Premiership

(1) Aston Villa v Coventry
(2) Blackburn v Bolton
(3) Derby v West Ham
(4) Leeds v Everton
(5) Leicester v Crystal Palace
(-) † Liverpool v Manchester Utd (11.15)
(6) † Newcastle v Arsenal
(7) † Tottenham v Chelsea

Nationwide League
First division

(8) Bury v Middlesbrough
(9) * Crewe v Huddersfield
(10) Manchester City v Wolverhampton
(11) Norwich v Sheffield Utd
(12) Nottingham Forest v Bradford
(13) Port Vale v Birmingham
(14) Portsmouth v Stoke
(15) Queens Park Rangers v Sunderland
(16) Reading v Charlton
(17) * Swindon v Oxford Utd
(18) Tranmere v Ipswich
(19) West Bromwich v Stockport

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nottm Forest	20	12	5	3	32	16	41
Middlesbrough	20	11	6	3	34	17	39
Sheff Utd	19	10	8	1	29	16	38
West Bromwich	20	11	4	5	22	15	37
Swindon	20	10	4	6	26	27	34
Charlton	19	9	5	5	38	26	32
Stockport	20	9	5	6	33	26	32
Sunderland	19	8	6	5	29	21	30
Wolverhampton	19	8	5	6	24	22	29
Bradford	20	7	8	5	19	19	29
QPR	20	7	6	7	26	32	27
Port Vale	20	7	5	8	25	25	26
Stoke	20	7	5	8	24	26	26
Birmingham	20	6	7	7	20	17	25
Norwich	20	6	5	9	18	30	23
Tranmere	19	6	3	10	26	28	21
Man City	20	5	6	9	23	24	21
Bury	20	4	9	7	21	29	21
Reading	20	5	6	9	19	31	21
Oxford Utd	20	5	5	10	23	28	20
Ipswich	19	4	8	7	21	23	20
Crewe	20	5	3	12	22	31	18
Huddersfield	20	4	5	11	16	32	17
Portsmouth	18	3	5	10	21	30	14

Third division

(—) Scarborough v Rochdale

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lincoln	21	11	7	3	23	16	40
Peterborough	21	10	9	2	39	19	39
Notts County	21	10	8	3	29	21	38
Exeter	21	9	8	4	30	23	35
Scunthorpe	20	9	6	5	28	24	33
Rotherham	21	8	8	5	34	31	32
Barnet	21	9	5	7	31	28	32
Hartlepool	21	7	11	3	30	23	32
Chester	21	9	4	8	31	27	31
Torquay	21	8	7	6	31	30	31
Macclesfield	20	7	9	4	28	20	30
Scarborough	20	8	4	8	31	30	28
L Orient	21	7	7	7	21	19	28
Colchester	20	7	6	7	23	28	27
Cardiff	20	5	12	3	20	19	27
Shrewsbury	20	7	5	8	31	30	26
Camb Utd	21	5	9	7	28	28	24
Mansfield	21	6	6	9	26	26	24
Rochdale	20	7	2	11	24	25	23
Swansea	21	6	3	12	22	32	21
Darlington	20	4	8	8	23	30	20
Hull	21	5	4	12	28	39	19
Brighton	21	3	6	12	15	29	15
Doncaster	21	1	6	14	14	49	9

FA Cup
Second round

(—) Cambridge Utd v Stevenage
(—) Cardiff v Hendon
(21) Cheltenham v Boreham Wood
(20) Colchester v Hereford
(22) Fulham v Southend
(30) Grimsby v Chesterfield
(23) * Hednesford v Darlington
(—) Lincoln v Emley
(24) * Macclesfield v Walsall
(—) Northampton v Basingstoke
(25) Oldham v Blackpool
(26) Peterborough v Dagenham and Red
(27) Preston v Notts County
(28) Rotherham v King's Lynn
(29) Scunthorpe v Ilkeston
(31) * Torquay v Watford
(32) Wigan v York
(—) * Wisbech v Bristol Rovers

Vauxhall Conference

(41) Halifax v Stalybridge P
(42) Hayes v Telford
(43) Kidderminster v Dover
(—) Morecambe v Gateshead
(—) Northwich v Rushden and Diamonds
(44) Southport v Leek
(—) Welling v Slough
(45) Yeovil v Kettering

Bell's Scottish League
Premier division

(33) Aberdeen v St Johnstone
(34) Dundee Utd v Dunfermline
(—) Hearts v Motherwell (2.0)
(35) Kilmarnock v Celtic

First division

(36) Airdrie v Dundee
(37) Falkirk v Partick
(38) Raith v Greenock Morton
(39) St Mirren v Hamilton
(40) Stirling v Ayr

Third division

(—) Arbroath v East Stirling

COVERAGE

TELEVISION: Today: BBC1: *Football Focus*, from 12.20pm; *Match of the Day*, from 10.50pm. Sky Sports 1: Premiership, Liverpool v Manchester United (live), from 10.30am. Tomorrow: BBC1: *Match of the Day* (repeat), from 7am. Channel 4: *Football Italia*, AC Milan v Bari (live), from 1.10pm. Sky Sports 1: Premiership, Wimbledon v Southampton (live), from 3pm; Spanish league, Real Sociedad v Valencia (live), from 6.30pm; FA Cup second round highlights, from 8.30pm. RADIO: Today: BBC Radio 5 Live: Commentary on Liverpool v Manchester United in *Sport on Five*, from 11am (and other Premiership matches). Tomorrow: BBC Radio 5 Live: Commentary on Wimbledon v Southampton and Rangers v Hibernian in *Sunday Sport*, from 1pm.

Tennents Scottish Cup
First round

(—) Cowdenbeath v Montrose
(—) East Fife v Stranraer
(—) Fraserburgh v Clyde
(—) Inverness CT v Whitehill

Auto Windscreens Shield
Northern section
First round

(—) Shrewsbury v Hartlepool

Dr Martens League
Premier division

(—) Bromsgrove v Atherstone
(—) Burton Albion v Forest Green
(—) Crawley v Worcester City
(—) Halesowen v Dorchester
(46) Merthyr v Sittingbourne
(47) Nuneaton v Cambridge City
(48) Rothwell v Bath
(49) Salisbury v Ashford
(—) St Leonards v Gloucester
(—) Tamworth v Hastings

DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Midland division: Bedworth v Redditch; Bilston v Evesham; Brackley Town v Hinckley Utd; Corby v Sutton Coldfield Town; Moor Green v Blakenall; RC Warwick v Solihull Boro; Raunds T v Grantham; Shepshed D v Paget R; VS Rugby v Stourbridge. Southern division: Bashley v Newport IoW; Chelmsford v Newport AFC; Cinderford v Fareham; Erith and Belvedere v Clevedon; Fisher London v Baldock; Tonbridge Angels v Cirencester Town; Trowbridge v Waterlooville; Weston-super-Mare v Havant; Weymouth v Margate; Witney v Fleet T; Yate v Dartford.

RYMAN LEAGUE: Premier division: Dulwich v Carshalton; Enfield v Kingstonian; Heybridge v Walton and Hersham; Oxford City v Bishop's Stortford; Purfleet v Aylesbury; Sutton United v Harrow; Yeading v Hitchin. First division: Abingdon Town v Staines; Aldershot Town v Worthing; Barton Rovers v Thame Utd; Billericay v Berkhamsted; Bognor Regis v Maidenhead; Chertsey v Leatherhead; Croydon v Grays; Hampton v Molesey; Leyton Pennant v Wokingham; Uxbridge v Romford; Whyteleafe v Wembley. Second division: Braintree v Barking; Edgware v Windsor and Eton; Egham v Bracknell; Horsham v Chalfont St Peter; Hungerford v Wivenhoe; Leighton Town v Wealdstone; Marlow v Bedford T; Northwood v Cheshunt; Tilbury v Met Police; Tooting and Mitcham v Canvey Island; Witham v Banstead. Third division: Aveley v Southall; Camberley Town v East Thurrock; Clapton v Flackwell Heath; Croydon v Harlow; H Hempstead v Dorking; Hornchurch v Corinthian-Casuals; Lewes v Epsom and Ewell; Tring v Kingsbury; Ware v Ford Utd; Wingate and Finchley v Hertford.

UNIBOND LEAGUE: Premier division: Altrincham v Frickley; Barrow v Leigh RMI; Blyth Spartans v Boston; Colwyn Bay v Gainsborough; Guiseley v Accrington Stanley; Hyde v Bishop Auckland; Marine v Lancaster; Radcliffe v Chorley; Runcorn v Alfreton; Spennymoor v Winsford. First division: Ashton United v Matlock Town; Bradford Pk Ave v Droylsden; Buxton v Whitley Bay; Eastwood Town v Workington; Great Harwood v Stocksbridge PS; Gretna v Farsley Celtic; Lincoln United v Whitby; Netherfield v Flixton; Trafford v Belper Town; Albion v Harrogate Town; Worksop v Congleton.

LEAGUE OF WALES: Caernarfon v Aberystwyth (2.0); Connah's Quay v Carmarthen Town (2.30); Ebbw Vale v Flint Town (2.30); Haverfordwest v Cemaes Ynys Mon (2.30); Inter Cable-Tel v Bangor City (2.0); Newtown v Conwy (2.30); Porthmadog v Caersws (2.30); Rhayader Town v Rhyl (2.30); TNS v Barry (2.30); Welshpool v Cwmbran (2.30).

SMIRNOFF IRISH LEAGUE: Premier division: Ards v Ballymena; Glentoran v Crusaders; Linfield v Glenavon; Omagh v Coleraine; Portadown v Cliftonville. First division: Ballyclare v Carrick; Distillery v Bangor; Dungannon Swifts v Newry; Larne v Limavady Utd.

FAI HARP LAGER NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Kilkenny v UCD (7.30).

HIGHLAND LEAGUE: Elgin v Clachnacuddin; Forres Mechanics v Deveronvale; Fort William v Nairn County; Huntly v Brora; Keith v Cove; Peterhead v Buckie Thistle; Rothes v Wick Academy.

ARNOTT INSURANCE NORTH LEAGUE: First division: Billingham Town v Penrith; Consett v Stockton; Durham v Bedlington Terriers; Easington cwm v Dunston Federation; Northallerton v Crook; Seaham Red Star v Murton; Shildon v Billingham; South Shields v Guisborough; Tow Law v Morpeth.

FA PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: Arsenal v Wimbledon (10.45); Chelsea v West Ham (10.45); Crystal Palace v Tottenham (11.0); Derby v Sunderland (11.30); Leeds v Sheffield Wednesday (11.0); Middlesbrough v Barnsley (11.0). Nottingham Forest v Coventry (11.0); Southampton v Queens Park Rangers (11.0).

TOMORROW

FA Carling Premiership

Wimbledon v Southampton (4.0)

FA Cup
Second round

Bournemouth v Bristol City (1.0)

Bell's Scottish League
Premier division

Rangers v Hibernian

FAI HARP LAGER NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Derry v Cork (2.0).

FA WOMEN'S PREMIER LEAGUE: National division: Croydon v Doncaster (at Croydon FC, 2.0); Liverpool v Arsenal (at Kirkby Sports Centre, 12.0); Wembley v Tranmere (at Hanwell Town FC, 1.0).

FA WOMEN'S LEAGUE: Northern division: Bloxwich Town v Sheffield Wednesday; Huddersfield v Arnold. Southern division: Rushden and Diamonds v Southampton Saints; Wimbledon v Whitehawk.

Statistics compiled by Julian Desborough

RUGBY UNION

Dixon demands lion-hearted display from Scots

By Mark Souster

FOR Ian McGeechan and Jim Telfer, the British Isles tour to South Africa must seem an eternity ago. Six months ago they were the architects of the British Lions' success in plotting one of the great sporting upsets. Today their opponents are again the Springboks, but the environment and the challenge is radically different, as must be their expectations for Scotland as they prepare to meet the world champions at Murrayfield.

McGeechan and Telfer are now an integral part of the Scotland set-up, lending their considerable experience and support to Richie Dixon, the coach, and his assistant, David Johnston. But even they cannot make gold out of lead. In South Africa they had the cream of the British Isles with which to work and mould into a series-winning side: now the resources at their disposal are considerably slimmer, indeed threadbare after a spate of injuries.

Stewart Campbell has a knee injury, but the odds are that he will be fit. If not, Stuart Grimes, of Watsonians, will come in. The fact that Tom Smith, Doddie Weir and Alan Tait could not even be considered and Grant McKelvey, the hooker, was a late withdrawal only reinforces the magnitude of the task facing Scotland. Gordon Bulloch, the 21-year-old Glasgow captain, replaces McKelvey and wins his first cap after touring the republic in the summer. "I have seen what South African rugby is like, but this is a vast step up," he said.

If nothing else Dixon, and an increasingly disillusioned public, must hope that the spineless performance against Australia a fortnight ago is not repeated. That earned the team unflattering headlines such as "Shower of Scotland".

"It is going to take a tremendous improvement in the blood and guts department," Dixon said yesterday. "The first thing is we have to show commitment. These guys [Scotland] have been on the floor, but they are now in the right frame of mind and know their responsibilities. We are giving away a lot in weight, but if Scotland get everything right we will have a chance — but it will have to be everything."

It could be argued that the Lions' success perversely did South Africa a favour. It kick-started their renaissance under Nick Mallett, the new coach, and their form in beating France and England has been eye-opening.

While New Zealand have been the focus of attention, South Africa have quietly gone about their business and demonstrated a whole new approach — one that suggests that they, and they alone, could run the All Blacks close.

Having beaten England comprehensively, and even without the injured Henry Honiball, who is replaced by Jannie de Beer at fly half, the pressure on South Africa has eased. Like New Zealand, the Springboks want to make a statement here and end their year on a high.

In Edinburgh they have appeared relaxed and confident and talk warmly of the difference that Mallett and his style of man-management has made. "It is a breath of fresh air," Gary Teichmann, the captain has said. They do not underestimate Scotland who have something to prove; but now that the shackles have been removed they know they have the all-round ability to run the Scots ragged.

In 1994, the last time that they played at Murrayfield, South Africa did just that, winning 34-10. Joost van der Westhuizen, who is injured, scored two of their five tries that day. Should James Small emulate Van der Westhuizen's achievement this afternoon, he will overtake Danie Gerber as his country's leading try-scorer.

Telfer accepts that Scotland, realistically, do not have a prayer. "They have reacted very well to what happened in the summer. They have changed their game plan and are far more expansive," he said. "Mallett has given them their head. Beating them will be the greatest achievement we have ever had."

SCOTLAND	SOUTH AFRICA
R J S Shepherd (Melrose)	15 **P C Montgomery** (W Province)
C A Joiner (Leicester)	14 **J T Small** (Western Province)
A G Stanger (Hawick)	13 **A H Snyman** (N. Transvaal)
C M Chalmers (Melrose)	12 **D J Muir** (Western Province)
D A Stark (Glasgow Hawks)	11 **P W G Rossouw** (Western Prov)
G P J Townsend (Northampton)	10 **J H de Beer** (Free State)
A D Nicol (Bath)	9 **W Swanepoel** (Free State)
D I W Hilton (Bath)	1 **J P du Randt** (Free State)
G C Bulloch (West of Scotland)	2 **J Dalton** (Gauteng)
M J Stewart (Northampton)	3 **A C Garvey** (Natal)
S J Campbell (Dundee HSFP)	4 **K Otto** (Northern Transvaal)
S Murray (Bedford)	5 **M G Andrews** (Natal)
R I Wainwright (Dundee HSFP)*	6 **J Erasmus** (Free State)
I R Smith (Moseley)	7 **A G Venter** (Free State)
E W Peters (Bath)	8 **G H Teichmann** (Natal)*
*Captain	*Captain

[illegible]

REPLACEMENTS: 16 K M Logan (Wasps), 17 D W Hodge (Watsonians), 18 G Armstrong (Newcastle), 19 P Walton (Newcastle), 20 G Graham (Newcastle), 21 J A Hay (Hawick)

REPLACEMENTS: 16 J Swart (W Province), 17 P F Smith (Griqualand West), 18 D van Zyl (Mpumalanga), 19 A D Aitken (W Province), 20 W Meyer (Free State), 21 A E Drotske (Free State)

The haka, performed by the All Blacks since 1905, has become a symbol of pride and manhood. Photograph: Simon Bruty/Allsport

Song and dance deserves respect

Christopher Irvine looks at the history of the haka, a Maori ritual from 1820 adopted by the All Blacks

Maybe if the All Blacks adopted ceremonial dress for the haka, as first performed by the all-Maori touring team of 1888, they could silence a chorus of *Swing Low* at Twickenham today. Imagine, too, the beetle-browed Richard Cockerill attempting to stare down a strutting Norm Hewitt, resplendent in ostrich-feather cape and tasselled cap.

The caps were doffed as the players jumped at the end of the haka, to which Cockerill, presumably, would stamp on the dandy headgear. It would be a fascinating preliminary. As it is, Cockerill and England's response (the hokey-cokey, perhaps) is as eagerly awaited as the 80 minutes that will follow New Zealand's call to arms.

Was respect for the haka, which Jim Fleming, the referee, intends to insist upon, really broken at Old Trafford a fortnight ago? Cockerill's eyeballing challenge offended John Hart, the All Blacks' coach, but not everyone in New Zealand shared his sense of indignity. As much as tradition is bound up by the haka, it is plain that psychological foreplay has transcended cultural showmanship.

The All Blacks originally performed the haka — it means "a dance" — as a non-bellicose, pre-match diversion for the crowds. All that changed during the first World Cup in Australasia in 1987, won by New Zealand, when the haka became a potent symbol of national pride and manhood, which Wayne Shelford, a subsequent captain, exploited to gee up the side.

Hika Reid, the last Maori All Blacks hooker before Hewitt, said: "There was a sense of putting on a show, but I found the haka a great way to get psyched up. It appealed to my traditions. The trouble before 1987 was that the Pakehas [Europeans] simply went through the motions. Some didn't even know the words. It didn't have much meaning."

Until he saw Shelford performing the haka, Va'aiga Tuigamala, whose tongue-flicking, eyeball-popping performances became synonymous with the ritual, had not taken much notice. "I looked at him [Shelford] and thought, 'There's a warrior who's really proud of his country'," Tuigamala said. "The haka gives all New Zealanders an identity and is a challenge to the opposition. I try to do it well to let people know how I feel about my country. It unites all our different cultures."

No All Black, past or present, will say that it is used to try to intimidate the opposition. "Some players might find it intimidating, but that was not my intention," Tuigamala said. That, however, was clearly the purpose of Maori troops who purportedly went into a haka routine before hand-to-hand fighting in the desert campaigns of the Second World War.

Not that any warlike tones are attached to the "Ka mate" haka as performed by the All Blacks since 1905. It is common Maori practice to adapt existing haka and the version today is only a portion of a long chant attributed in 1820 to Te Rauparaha, a warrior chief. He escaped his enemies by being hidden in a kumara (sweet potato) storage pit, while a local chief and his wife created a diversion, followed by Te Rauparaha's getaway by primitive ladder and an exultant cry of freedom.

It is a dance of triumph and exultation. Cockerill might have overstepped physical boundaries by going nose-to-nose with Hewitt, but if the haka is designed as a challenge, then the England hooker took it, literally, at face value. As Reid remarked, there are few greater offences than ignoring the haka. David Campese, the former Australia wing, did it once and no self-respecting New Zealander will forgive him.

England would probably be advised to avoid any confrontation. Are you listening, Mr Cockerill?

THE HAKA EXPLAINED

Ka mate! Ka mate! Ka ora! Ka ora!
[It is death! It is death! It is life! It is life!
Ka mate! Ka mate! Ka ora! Ka Ora!
Tenei te tangata puhuruhuru
Behold the brave man
Nana nei i te tiki mai whakawhiti te ra
Who has caused the sun to shine again
Aue upane! Aue kaupane! Upane! Kaupane! Whiti te ra!
Up the ladder! Up and up! Into the light of the sun!]

St Mary's prepare to be hailed again

From Karl Johnston in Dublin

IT IS far too early to predict that the meeting this afternoon of the south Dublin suburban neighbours, Terenure College and St Mary's College, at Lakelands Park will decide the destiny of the AIB League title, but it appears an interesting *tête-à-tête*.

Last season, Terenure finished third in the first division, behind Lansdowne and the winners, Shannon, while St Mary's were a point behind. Both clubs have begun this term with victories, St Mary's with a facile one over Blackrock College, and Terenure with a less emphatic success against Cork Constitution. Terenure and Lansdowne, soon to meet in the Kitty O'Shea Leinster championship final, can lay claim to be the Dublin favourites for league honours, but the smart money seems to be on St Mary's, even though Shannon do not appear notably worried.

The St Mary's star has been rising because of its rising stars. Last season, the club's only international players were Denis Hickie and Victor Costello, the latter returning after a less than auspicious run with London Irish. Now, that pair have been augmented by three new Ireland players — Kevin Nowlan, the full back, Conor McGuinness, the scrum half, and John McWeeney, the left wing. True, McWeeney was demoted after his debut against the All Blacks three weeks ago, but Nowlan, with two, McGuinness and Costello all scored tries in the defeat of Canada last Sunday.

By contrast, Terenure have a paucity of household names, their sole international being the former Ireland full back, Ciaran Clarke, although David Coleman, the right wing, toured New Zealand with the development squad last summer. But they have some useful forwards, among them James Blaney, the hooker, and Peter Bruce, the tight head, who featured with Leinster on a few occasions earlier this season.

Lansdowne, the other Leinster front-runners, are away to Blackrock today, while Ballymena should pick up another two points from their visit to Old Belvedere at Anglesea Road. Dungannon could do likewise in their home match against Cork Constitution.

Racecourse Ground to stage 1999 World Cup game

By Our Sports Staff

WREXHAM has been awarded one of the group games in the 1999 World Cup after successfully hosting this season's international between Wales and Romania. The Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) confirmed yesterday that Wrexham Football Club's Racecourse Ground and Stradey Park, Llanelli, would be the two additional venues in Wales's qualifying pool.

A capacity 12,000 crowd saw Wales rattle up 70 points against Romania in August. Terry Cobner, the WRU director of rugby, said: "We have been in touch with the local council at Wrexham, and are hopeful that building work will be completed in time to allow an increased capacity of 25,000."

Wales will play their fixtures at the £120 million Millennium Stadium, which is under construction on the former Cardiff Arms Park site.

The WRU also confirmed that Twickenham is being considered as a possible location for this season's Welsh Cup final. Last season's final between Cardiff and Swansea was the last game staged at Cardiff Arms Park before demolition work began.

Meanwhile, Cardiff and the Welsh Rugby Union are poised to settle their differences and finalise a ten-year loyalty agreement next week. The Arms Park club are the only side from the eight-strong Welsh premier division not to have signed a formal contract with the WRU.

"We have made considerable progress in recent weeks in our negotiations, and there are now only one or two unresolved points," Glanmor Griffiths, the WRU chairman, said.

Once Cardiff reach arrangement, they will be paid around £220,000 in back payments from the union.

☐ The England A and Combined Services winger, Brian Johnson, who scored 27 tries for Newbury last season, is joining Gloucester on a month's loan with a view to a permanent move.

TIMES RUGBY UNION STATISTICS

THE TIMES WORLD RUGBY UNION TABLE

		P	W	D	L	F (Points)	A (Points)	%
1	New Zealand	26	24	0	2	1075	444	92.30
2	South Africa	28	18	0	10	923	601	64.29
	France	28	18	0	10	841	602	64.29
4	England	18	10	1	7	434	328	58.33
5	Australia	25	14	1	10	681	562	58.00
6	Wales	24	11	0	13	591	640	45.83
7	Argentina	19	8	1	10	503	636	44.74
8	Scotland	14	5	1	8	264	387	39.29
9	Ireland	15	5	0	10	305	446	33.33
10	Italy	16	4	1	11	404	561	28.13

based on all full internationals played since the World Cup (June 1995)

RECORD AGAINST 1995 WORLD CUP TOP FOUR

		P	W	D	L	F (Tries)	A (Tries)	%
1	New Zealand	10	8	0	2	29	24	80.00
2	South Africa	13	7	0	6	40	28	53.85
3	France	8	3	0	5	11	20	37 50
4	Australia	14	5	0	9	31	40	35.71
5	Scotland	6	1	0	5	10	23	16 67
6	Italy	7	1	0	6	14	40	14.29
	Wales	7	1	0	6	12	26	14 29
8	Argentina	11	1	0	10	20	65	9.10
9	England	5	0	0	5	4	12	0.00
	Ireland	5	0	0	5	3	25	0 00

TRI NATIONS v FIVE NATIONS

	P	W	D	L	F (Points)	A (Points)	%
Tri nations	25	23	1	1	842	370	94 00
Five nations	25	1	1	23	370	842	6.00

Country-by-country

		P	W	D	L	F	A	%
1	South Africa	8	8	0	0	253	122	100 00
2	Australia	10	9	1	0	309	141	95 00
3	New Zealand	7	6	0	1	280	107	85 71
1	France	8	1	0	7	134	230	12.50
2	England	5	0	1	4	54	118	10 00
3	Ireland	2	0	0	2	27	85	0 00
	Scotland	4	0	0	4	70	164	0 00
	Wales	6	0	0	6	85	245	0 00

based on matches between the Five nations (England, France, Ireland, Scotland, Wales) and the Tri nations (Australia, New Zealand, South Africa) since the last World Cup; 17 of the 25 matches have been played in the northern hemisphere. Average match score is, Tri nations 34 Five nations 15

TOP INTERNATIONAL POINTS-SCORERS (present players)

		Tries	Con	Pen	DG	Caps	Pts
1	N Jenkins (Wales)	6	68	126	3	52	552
2	T Lacroix (France)	6	32	89	2	43	367
3	A Mehrtens (New Zealand)	5	66	56	6	21	343
4	E Elwood (Ireland)	—	15	48	2	21	180
5	I Evans (Wales)	*33	—	—	—	71	157
6	P Saint Andre (France)	*32	—	—	—	69	151
7	C Spencer (New Zealand)	5	31	20	—	7	147
8	H Honiball (South Africa)	1	38	22	—	22	143
9	C Chalmers (Scotland)	5	10	24	9	53	140
10	P Grayson (England)	—	8	35	4	9	133

* includes tries scored before 1992 which were worth four points

TRIES PER INTERNATIONAL MATCH

		Career	Tries	Matches	Per match
1	C Cullen (New Zealand)	1996-97	21	21	1.00
2	*I Smith (Scotland)*	*1924-33*	*24*	*32*	*0.75*
3	J Wilson (New Zealand)	1993-97	24	34	0.70
4	D Campese (Australia)	1982-96	64	101	0.63
5	C Darrouy (France)	1957-67	23	40	0.57
	R Underwood (England)	1984-96	49	85	0.57
7	J Kirwan (New Zealand)	1984-95	35	63	0.55
8	A Stanger (Scotland)	1989-97	22	46	0 47
9	I Evans (Wales)	1987-97	33	71	0.46
10	P Saint Andre (France)	1990-97	32	69	0.46
11	G Edwards (Wales)	1967-78	20	46	0.43
12	S Blanco (France)	1980-91	38	93	0 40

(players who have scored at least 20 international tries)

England v New Zealand

	P	E won	NZ won
In England	13	3	10
In New Zealand	5	1	4
Neutral	1	0	1
Total	19	4	15

HEAD-TO-HEAD TODAY

England		N Zealand
206	Caps	488
70/136	Backs/forwards	216/272
13	Tries	150
5/8	Backs/forwards	103/47
26 6	Average age	27 2
24 7/26.5	Backs/forwards	25.5/28.9
129st 2lb	Pack weight	133st 2lb

TRY-SCORERS: England: 4: De Glanville; 3: *Dallaglio*; 2: Hill; 1: Back, Bracken, Johnson, Leonard. New Zealand: 24: Wilson, 21: Cullen; 20: Bunce; 17: Z Brooke; 14: Lomu; 11: Marshall; 9: Kronfeld; 8: Jones, Little; 5: Mehrtens; 4: R Brooke, Brown, Randell; 1: Allen. (Only Hewitt has not scored an international try.)

MATCH-BY-MATCH

Year	Venue	Winners	Score
1905	Crystal Palace	N Zealand	15-0
1925	Twickenham	N Zealand	17-11
1936	Twickenham	England	13-0
1954	Twickenham	N Zealand	5-0
1963	Auckland	N Zealand	21-11
	Christchurch	N Zealand	9-6
1964	Twickenham	N Zealand	14-0
1967	Twickenham	N Zealand	23-11
1973	Twickenham	N Zealand	9-0
	Auckland	England	16-10
1978	Twickenham	N Zealand	16-6
1979	Twickenham	N Zealand	10-9
1983	Twickenham	England	15-9
1985	Christchurch	N Zealand	18-13
	Wellington	N Zealand	42-15
1991	Twickenham	N Zealand	18-12
1993	Twickenham	England	15-9
1995	Cape Town	N Zealand	45-29
1997	Old Trafford	N Zealand	25-8

Most points in a match: England: 12: J Callard (1993) New Zealand: 20: J Lomu (1995) Most tries: England: 2: R Underwood and W Carling (1995). New Zealand: 4: D McGregor (1905), J Lomu (1995)

Scotland v South Africa

	P	S won	SA won
In Scotland	8	3	5
In South Africa	1	0	1
Total	*9*	*3*	*6*

MATCH-BY-MATCH

Year	Venue	Winners	Score
1906	Glasgow	Scotland	6-0
1912	Inverleith	S Africa	16-0
1932	Murrayfield	S Africa	6-3
1951	Murrayfield	S Africa	44-0
1960	Port Elizabeth	S Africa	18-10
1961	Murrayfield	S Africa	12-5
1965	Murrayfield	Scotland	8-5
1969	Murrayfield	Scotland	6-3
1994	Murrayfield	S Africa	34-10

Most points in a match: Scotland: 7: A Smith (1960) South Africa: 14: A Geffin (1951). Most tries: Scotland: nobody has scored more than one South Africa: 2: J Stegmann (1912), C Koch (1951), G van Zyl (1960), J van der Westhuizen (1994)

■ *Compiled by Stephen McCormack*

هكذا من الأصل

محمد امين الأكحل

All Blacks set for grand finale

By David Hands
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE air of youthful optimism that rose with Clive Woodward's first selection as England coach — was it only a month ago? — has been tempered by the cold blast of reality. Today at Twickenham, England draw their autumn series of internationals against the southern-hemisphere powers to a close in the knowledge that only the most supreme optimist would back them to beat New Zealand.

"I'm disappointed that we haven't collected one win from this series so far, but I'm putting my style on the line," Woodward said. "I want to get to the World Cup in 1999 with a team that the whole of England genuinely feels can win the tournament. I have a playing philosophy and I will go into the five nations' next year even more focused on keeping the ball in hand and trying to score tries.

ENGLAND'S
AUTUMN
CHALLENGE

"In the last ten years, England have been bottom of the league at scoring tries and I'm determined to change that. It's not easy to turn that round overnight and the biggest part of it is getting numbers one to eight to buy into it, to understand what I'm trying to do. We're not going to beat the All Blacks by pummelling them in the scrums and lineouts, even though if we play that way we might beat Scotland, Ireland and Wales and, sometimes, France.

"Regardless of the results, the last month has been brilliant because it has given me a clear understanding of where we are."

Already, Woodward has a complete accord with his captain, Lawrence Dallaglio, on the way forward and a team, half of them under 25, who seek to prove themselves in the highest company. He has also been encouraged by the response of older players to disappointment — Tim Rodber, out with concussion, and Mark Regan, who nearly forced his way back in at hooker with a storming game for England A against the All Blacks on Tuesday.

Cockerill, the England hooker, relaxes during training at Twickenham. Photograph: Stefan Rousseau

However, with the best will in the world, it is hard to see the Royal and SunAlliance international at Twickenham as more than a holding operation for England, despite the positive elements of the first game between the countries at Old Trafford a fortnight ago, when New Zealand won 25-8. They should not be overwhelmed at the set-pieces, but there is a general acknowledgement among the coaching fraternity that individual skills linger behind those of their opponents.

It is not only the application of those skills, but where to apply them. New Zealanders have an instinctive feel for the game and how it will develop, whereas too much play in England appears to be by numbers. Hence the appearance of the two All Blacks locks, Ian Jones and Robin Brooke, at Old Trafford in the movements that led to first-half tries, the first scored by Jones himself.

It is a remarkable statistic that every member of this New Zealand team has scored an international try, with one exception: Norman Hewitt, the bald barrel of a hooker limited by Sean Fitzpatrick's longevity to only seven appearances, several as a replacement. You would not bet against him putting that right this afternoon, either.

The All Blacks believe that they failed to do themselves justice in Manchester, perhaps thrown by the clout suffered after only six minutes by Justin Marshall, their captain, which cost Martin Johnson, of England, a one-match suspension. Yet there has been an undaunted quality to the English displays throughout this tour: only at Huddersfield were Emerging England overwhelmed by the All Blacks and Marshall, for one, concedes that they can derive encouragement from the events of the past three weeks. "They realise that they can take the game to us and we knew they would play well in the first test," the scrum half said. "England put pressure on us, a lot more than the Irish did, though last week's game against Wales was much better."

Against opponents of the highest quality, however, England have still to cultivate the knack of turning pressure into points and John Hart, the New Zealand coach, contends that they will not do so until they establish a playing philosophy between coaches and referees. "I think there is some confusion in the English game," Hart said, "not only in the structure, but in the way they are playing the game.

"Attitudes are driven by coaches and it's crucial to have a more cohesive coaching programme. The other key issue is consistency of refereeing. You can't have a philosophy towards the game until you have that consistency. One of the reasons southern-hemisphere rugby is going so well is because there is total cohesion between coaches and referees." Hart has winced at some of the refereeing that he has seen on this tour, when the game's most important law, that of advantage, has been disregarded.

Today, northern-hemisphere officials take charge, Jim Fleming at Twickenham and Patrick Thomas, of France, at Murrayfield. Fleming, the highly-experienced Scottish official, will have been interested to hear the suggestion made yesterday by Roger Uttley, the England manager, that "every time we get the ball in their 22, the whistle goes, giving us a penalty. Southern-hemisphere countries are happy to concede penalties rather than letting us have the ball fromm a ruck or a maul, because we could score a try from that position."

Such criticism will be meat and drink to Hart, who is delighted that, after the hardest of years, his players retain a freshness and enthusiasm that bodes ill for England. They have the motivation: an unbeaten record, not only for the tour but for the year; a farewell to arms for Zinzan Brooke ("I wonder if there has been another player ever with quite his skill set," Hart said) and a tribute to Fitzpatrick, the injured captain, who must watch from the stands. On a frosty day, New Zealand seem set to light the fire.

TODAY'S TEAMS AT TWICKENHAM

ENGLAND		NEW ZEALAND
M B Perry (Bath)	15	C M Cullen (Manawatu)
D L Rees (Sale)	14	J W Wilson (Otago)
W J H Greenwood (Leicester)	13	F E Bunce (North Harbour)
P R de Glanville (Bath)	12	W K Little (North Harbour)
A S Healey (Leicester)	11	J T Lomu (Counties)
P J Grayson (Northampton)	10	A P Mehrtens (Canterbury)
K P P Bracken (Saracens)	9	J W Marshall (Canterbury)*
J Leonard (Harlequins)	1	M R Allen (Manawatu)
R Cockerill (Leicester)	2	N J Hewitt (Southland)
D J Garforth (Leicester)	3	O M Brown (Auckland)
M O Johnson (Leicester)	4	I D Jones (North Harbour)
G S Archer (Newcastle)	5	R M Brooke (Auckland)
L B N Dallaglio (Wasps)*	6	T C Randell (Otago)
N A Back (Leicester)	7	J A Kronfeld (Otago)
R A Hill (Saracens)	8	Z V Brooke (Auckland)
*Captain		*Captain

Referee: J M Fleming (Scotland)

REPLACEMENTS: 16 T R G Stimpson (Newcastle), 17 M J S Dawson (Northampton), 18 D J Grewcock (Saracens), 19 C M A Sheasby (Wasps), 20 K Yates (Bath), 21 M P Regan (Bath)	REPLACEMENTS: 16 S J McLeod (Waikato), 17 C J Spencer (Auckland), 18 J P Preston (Wellington), 19 C C Riechelmann (Auckland), 20 C K Barrell (Canterbury), 21 A D Oliver (Otago)

Harsh lessons should point way ahead for future success

LAWRENCE DALLAGLIO

Rugby followers in England will look at the series of matches in which we are engaged and see two defeats and a draw; that is the position, in black and white, and it will be difficult for them to draw much comfort from the dogged defence that has been a feature of the games played by New Zealand during their tour.

Yet I have been encouraged by the discovery that, in specific areas, we can compete with the All Blacks — and anyone else — and the knowledge that our players will improve. English players will win plenty of first and second-phase ball, but we have to look seriously at what happens after that, at sustaining the continuity of play that leads to tries.

More than 80 per cent of all games are won by the team scoring the most tries, which, given the difference in scoring values, is not that remarkable. We have scored two tries in three games, so it is quite clear that we have both to create more chances and to finish them.

Take the game against South Africa last week, when we finished on the end of a record home defeat. A minute before half-time, we were 11-0 up and should have turned round 25 or 30 points to the good. What I define as a scoring chance may differ from something clear-cut, like a knock-on just short of the line — it's the decision made by a player to attack a side of the field from deep where there are five defenders, when he should have attacked the side where there are only two.

'We need to remove the tendency to kick'

During that first half, when we dominated possession and territory, there were times when South Africa's defence was at sixes and sevens and we failed to capitalise on that. It's a question of vision and continuity, while, at the same time, remaining tight defensively. We pride ourselves on our one-to-one tackling, but two of their tries were scored because we failed in that area.

We have to rid ourselves of the tendency to kick when we think we are not making ground quickly enough, first because we need to develop the confidence that, by keeping the ball in hand, we can turn mediocre possession into good possession and, second, because when we do kick, it has to be inch-perfect, given the quality of counter-attacking runners in opposing ranks.

We also have to ensure that every player is involved, otherwise we will not have examined everyone's potential properly. At Leicester on Tuesday, neither of the England A wings touched the ball in open play — but the counterpoint to that is that every single player has to demonstrate that he wants to be involved.

I appreciate that some of our opponents this season possess wonderful natural skills that would allow them to be comfortable in any environment, but I also believe that the skills of our players are there and that it is our responsibility to allow them expression in the appropriate team framework: much of that comes from confidence. New Zealanders play with total confidence, everyone is aware of their part in the team and how they can bring their talents to bear.

Nevertheless, we remain excited about this testing series of games and there is tremendous anticipation over the game with New Zealand today. The All Blacks went away from Twickenham on their last appearance, in 1993, when they lost 15-9, and revolutionised their game, taking it to heights never reached before. People have to be brutally honest and say that if we continue to play only in a way with which we are comfortable, it won't be good enough to beat them or the Springboks. That is why this series may be the most important that we have played.

We must do without Mike Catt today because of his concussion. He has his critics, but he is far too good a player to leave out. Decision-making is part and parcel of the fly half's responsibility and that challenge now falls to Paul Grayson, who has already demonstrated his ability to control the game in the five nations' championship.

This, though, is a different level and we are looking forward to seeing how Paul responds, how the whole team responds. I would like to think that Paul can play in the same forceful way as Mike, because we are not going out to change radically what we have been trying to do so far.

It is how we react to adversity that will create winners. All the best players have bad games: Sean Fitzpatrick was here at Twickenham in 1993 and I regret his absence today because he is an extremely committed player, who has epitomised the All Black renaissance and their development in the professional era.

If this, too, is to be Zinzan Brooke's last game, then we will say goodbye to a great warrior for the All Blacks, one who has shown the ability to do what few other players would even try. There have been some harsh words spoken since we met at Old Trafford, but no bad blood has spilled over among the players. I have tremendous respect for the All Blacks — I would like to think that they will end their tour with the same feeling for us.

David Hands charts the course of an outstanding All Black career that spans ten years and three World Cups

Brooke the entertainer signs off

Murray Brooke was always going to be different, from the day when, as one of a class of five-year-olds, several of whom were named Murray, he put up his hand in answer to the teacher's suggestion that some of those present should change their name. Young Brooke opted for the corruption of his grandmother's maiden name, Zinzano, and added his birthdate — St Valentine's Day.

Today at Twickenham, Zinzan Valentine Brooke will run out for the hundredth and last time in the All Black strip. The 73,000 gathered there should make the most of it, for this is one of the most talented footballers of his generation — not the most capped, even though 58 internationals in the past ten years speak for themselves, but one of the most flamboyant and unpredictable of players.

It has been Brooke's cross that his skills are such that few, if any, coaches have been able to slip him into a convenient pigeonhole: he has played in all three back-row positions but only in the past three years, remarkable though it now seems, has he become a permanent fixture. To be fair to the New Zealand selectors, they have been able to choose from a rich crop of loose forwards. Brooke grew up during the era of Wayne Shelford and, as a No 8, had to stand comparison with the great man.

He was also part of the revisionist generation that demanded change from the 1991 All Blacks who lost the World Cup, part of the successful Auckland squad that generated so much jealousy elsewhere in the country that he had to convince a sceptical Laurie Mains (from Otago in the South Island) that Mains should pick him for the 1995 World Cup.

Yet he has become an icon. The new, liberated laws of the last two years were tailor-made for Brooke's loose-limbed athleticism, for his vision and multi-faceted skills. Ask Eric Miller, of Ireland and the British Isles, which player he holds in the highest regard and the answer is Brooke, the No 8 who not only scores tries but drops goals in internationals — as England, South Africa and, last Saturday, Wales will tell you.

Brooke, born in Waiuku, to the south of Auckland, grew up on his parents' farm in Walkworth, the fourth of six children of whom five were boys. Marty, his older brother, reached All Black trials, Robin, the younger, has played 43 times in the New Zealand second row; it was on the farm that he learnt to kick a ball, from one kauri tree to another, in competition with his siblings. That competitive trait is one of his most distinctive features. "I have never enjoyed playing for fun," he says.

The local club ran only two junior teams, under-10s and under-15s; after that, if you were good enough, you played in the seniors and the Brooke brothers were good enough. At 16, Zinzan learnt his trade with the men: "You had to learn how to survive, but the skills came from hours of practice in the garden," he said. "But when I look back now, I didn't have half the skills of some of the 10 to 12-year-olds I see today. They're doing stuff I did at 19 or 20: it's unreal."

Brooke used to play full back and fly half until Sandy, his father, suggested a move to the pack. It is an unnerving thought that he played at loose-head prop for the New Zealand Under-17 team and only afterwards moved to the back row where, as an open-side flanker, he won his first cap during the 1987 World Cup, against Argentina.

New Zealand might have lost him after a difficult 1993, when a contract to play in Japan was almost signed and sealed. Brooke's fate in sides selected by Mains was uncertain and he sought a career in which he could play and be rewarded for doing so. It took a deal with Sky Television to ensure that he remained at home and played in the 1995 World Cup in South Africa.

It also paved the way for a fresh career direction. He started, in his own words, as an ambassador for the TV station, making public appearances; now he has a contract for his own informal, Sports Cafe-style talkshow, which has achieved cult status.

Next year, however, he arrives at the Stoop Memorial Ground to take up a two-year contract with those perennial under-achievers, Harlequins: "I have been planning this since last year," he said. "I always knew 1997 would be my last year and it will give me a chance to step away from the game in New Zealand. I know that if I don't have the physical break, I'll get itchy feet and want to start playing again.

"When the time comes for my last game with the All Blacks I won't be that emotional about it because I've prepared for it." Yet even free spirits get caught up in the occasion: beneath the West Stand at Twickenham today, Brooke will go through the familiar routine. He will see the other black shirts around him and will know the need to perform for them that is key to any New Zealand side — they, in turn, will do so for him and England will be on the receiving end.

DARREN FLETCHER

Brooke will play his last international match this afternoon

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The New Millennium Watch
The New Centenary Faceted Watch

England's one-day specialists make winning start to their tour programme

Hollioake confirms captaincy potential

From Michael Henderson in Lahore

LAHORE (Pakistan A won toss): England XI beat Pakistan A by 35 runs

IF THE Champions Tournament, in which England join for the first time next week, gives them an ideal opportunity to measure themselves against three other international sides in a competitive atmosphere, the two one-day games they are playing here represent useful practice. To win as they did in the first of them last night, under lights, makes it doubly useful.

One man's performance was particularly important. Adam Hollioake was appointed captain of this 14-man party to gauge his fitness as cricketer and leader with a view to retaining him as the England one-day captain all the way to the World Cup in 1999. Michael Atherton, the Test captain, is not here, and is by no means certain of his place in the one-day side. Hollioake succeeded on both counts yesterday, making 86 good runs, and then taking two wickets at a crucial stage of the game. It seems he can do little wrong in this type of cricket.

Last summer he hit the winning run in all three Texaco Trophy internationals against Australia, although he found it difficult to translate that form into the five-day arena when the Test series started.

Yesterday, he handled his players in the middle with a sure touch. It was not easy in the last session when the ball slithered across the dewy grass making life awkward for the fielders, but England stuck to their guns.

Douggie Brown, of Warwickshire, took two wickets at either end of the innings and, besides Hollioake, Ealham also took a couple. Ealham achieved the important breakthrough when Akhtar Sarfraz, a handsome left-hander who had progressed to 69, chipped an easy catch to mid-wicket. Thereafter Pakistan lacked the resources to tilt at England's total of 264 for nine.

England left out Croft, Martin and Knight, although they will get a chance in the second match tomorrow. The side included no fewer than nine players who consider themselves bowlers, but Hollioake did not turn to his younger brother, Ben, Hick or Thorpe. In fact Hollioake minor had a quiet match making only four at No 3 before he drove to mid-wicket, where Shahid Nazir held a superb catch.

It was Nazir's third catch because he had already held a very good one by his boots to remove Stewart and a decent one to send back Ally Brown, whose first seven scoring strokes were boundaries. When Thorpe followed the younger Hollioake back to the pavilion, England had lost three wickets to successive balls.

It was no time for faint hearts and the captain immediately seized the initiative, together with Hick, who was no less assertive. The pair added 105 in 20 overs with considerable style until Hick, having reach his 50, tried to cut Afridi's googly and played on.

Ealham went immediately, yorked by Afridi's quicker ball — which is very quick indeed for a wrist spinner — and Douggie Brown was run out seeking a second run. Fleming, however, coming in at No 9, proved more durable. He made 29 from 25 balls before the innings closed and did well to ensure that England batted out their 50 overs. They were vital runs in the circumstances.

Hollioake was not happy to be given out leg-before as he attempted to whip Fazl-i-Akbar off his pads, though it seemed a reasonable shout. In all he faced 99 balls, finding the boundary six times, and clearing it with a lovely straight drive.

He manipulated the strike intelligently, getting his runs all round the field, and he was entitled to think a century lay within his compass.

How well England could contain Pakistan depended to a large extend on how Afridi set off. Last year, at the age of 17, he made a century off 38 balls against Sri Lanka, the fastest in the history of one-day internationals. He took on the Australians last winter, with some success, and did not try to hide his intentions here. It was with great pleasure, and not a little relief, that Douggie Brown defeated him with a ball that would clearly have hit the stumps. The bowler won another appeal two overs later and when Giles caught and bowled Babar Zaman with his first ball the match was evenly balanced.

It was then that Sarfraz began to play extremely well. His talents have been recognised by the selectors because he is joining the senior party for the trip to Sharjah and the cleanness and correctness of his batting yesterday was impressive. They are never short of decent young players in this country.

He survived the loss of Yousaf Youhana, who was stumped neatly by Stewart down the leg side, and a requirement of seven runs an over was not beyond him until Ealham's slower ball deceived him. The game slipped away from Pakistan after that and England closed in on victory with renewed purpose.

It had been a long day, extended by an hour's break for prayers during the England innings and an interval after tea when groundstaff cleared the dew from the grass with a big rope. So far as England were concerned, it was a day (and half a night) well spent.

Adam Hollioake swings lustily to square leg during an impressive innings of 86 yesterday. Photograph: Graham Chadwick/Allsport

SCOREBOARD FROM LAHORE

ENGLAND XI	
A D Brown c Shahid Nazir b Naeem	31
†A J Stewart c Shahid Nazir b Naeem	22
B C Hollioake c Shahid Nazir b Fazl	4
G A Hick b Shahid Afridi	50
G P Thorpe b Fazl	0
*A J Hollioake lbw b Fazl	86
M A Ealham b Shahid Afridi	0
D R Brown run out	8
M V Fleming not out	29
A F Giles b Fazl-i-Akbar	4
D W Headley not out	2
Extras (lb 9, w 15, nb 4)	28
Total (9 wkts, 50 overs)	264

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-49, 2-65, 3-65, 4-65, 5-170, 6-172, 7-196, 8-234, 9-252.

BOWLING: Shahid Nazir 8-0-52-0; Aqib Javed 8-1-45-0; Naeem Ashraf 6-0-31-2; Fazl-i-Akbar 8-0-40-4; Arshad Khan 10-1-39-0; Shahid Afridi 10-0-48-2.

Umpires: Javed Akhtar and Nazir Junior.

PAKISTAN A	
Shahid Afridi lbw b D R Brown	14
Mohammad Ramzan lbw b D R Brown	16
Babar Zaman c and b Giles	15
Akhtar Sarfraz c Thorpe b Ealham	69
Yousaf Youhana st Stewart b A J Hollioake	35
Naeem Ashraf not out	38
†Wasim Yousafi c A D Brown b A J Hollioake	4
Shahid Nazir b Ealham	16
Arshad Khan c and b D R Brown	6
*Aqib Javed b D R Brown	6
Fazl-i-Akbar c Stewart b Headley	1
Extras (b 2, lb 3, w 3, nb 1)	9
Total (48.1 overs)	229

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-24, 2-40, 3-73, 4-137, 5-167, 6-178, 7-204, 8-219, 9-228.

BOWLING: Headley 9.1-0-29-1; D R Brown 10-1-58-4; Fleming 5-1-22-0; Giles 6-0-30-1; Ealham 10-0-47-2; A J Hollioake 8-0-38-2.

NETBALL

Murtagh eager to end poor tradition

By Alix Ramsay

TRADITIONALLY, at this time of year, England put their reputation on the line in a series of international matches and if the opposition is New Zealand, as it is this year, traditionally England get well beaten.

In 47 meetings England have defeated New Zealand once — by a single goal 18 years ago. Now they have three more chances to improve on that record, in Brighton today, Birmingham on Wednesday and Newcastle next Saturday.

New Zealand are rather quaintly known as the Silver Ferns, but do not be fooled — they are big, strong and fast, and they are used to winning. They are ranked No 3 in the world but that is something of a sore point. A poor performance against South Africa at the world championships two years ago saw them finish third overall when they were expecting to do a lot better. But at least they beat England in the bronze medal play-off, leaving England to finish fourth as usual.

England, however, have a new spring in their step. They have a new coach, Mary Beardwood, and a healthy bank balance thanks to lottery funding.

England will be led by Fiona Murtagh, the captain since 1996. She began her sports career as a middle-distance runner but, uninspired by endless laps of the track, happened upon netball when a friend suggested she visit the local club. Coached by the former England captain, Pat Caine, Murtagh pushed her way through the ranks until now, at the age of 30, she is one of the more senior figures in Beardwood's young squad.

"The changes over the years have been amazing," Murtagh said. "The players are physically bigger than they were and the speed of the game has improved. There is a lot of strength and power — it is controlled but it is good to watch."

At 5ft 7in and with 82 caps to her name Murtagh has the size, speed and experience to take care of herself on the court but even so she is prepared for trouble. With liberal, if illegal, use of flailing elbows, a fair amount of skirt tugging and tripping, netball is not the genteel girls' school game that it appears.

"In Jamaica two years ago I finished one match with two black eyes," she said, "and as for Australia and New Zealand, they just drive straight through you because they are so much stronger. But any guy I've introduced to netball has always been impressed with what goes on and the skill involved."

Murtagh is retiring as an international after the Commonwealth Games next September.

Atapattu's defiance foiled by Chauhan

By Our Sports Staff

MARVAN ATAPATTU, the opener, fell two runs short of a century yesterday as Sri Lanka replied cautiously to India's first-innings total of 512 on the third day of the third and final Test in Bombay yesterday.

Atapattu, who hit 15 boundaries during his 403-minute innings, was the mainstay of his side's determined attempt to avoid the follow-on. Sri Lanka were 286 for five at the close, and would have been better placed but for a middle-order collapse late in the day.

Rajesh Chauhan took three wickets for 39 from 24 overs as India fought back to keep alive the possibility of a result.

Resuming at 66 for one, Atapattu and Kumara Dharmasena took the score to 179 before Dharmasena fell to a catch by Anil Kumble off Chauhan for 40.

Atapattu was caught superbly by Ajay Jadeja, a substitute fielder, at silly point off Chauhan.

Rohan Mahanama made a breezy 20 before being caught by Kumble off Venkatesh Prasad, the seam bowler. Arjuna Ranatunga, the captain, prodded at a turning ball from Chauhan and was dismissed for one.

Aravinda de Silva, dropped twice, remained unbeaten on 48 and Hashan Tillekeratne was on 4.

Kumble bowled tightly, but Javagal Srinath, the seam bowler, lost control and conceded 92 runs from 20 overs on a pitch giving him some assistance.

INDIA: First Innings 512 (S C Ganguly 173, S R Tendulkar 148, R S Dravid 93)

SRI LANKA: First Innings	
S T Jayasuriya c Azharuddin b Kumble	50
M S Atapattu c sub b Chauhan	98
H D P K Dharmasena c Kumble b Chauhan	40
R S Mahanama c Kumble b Prasad	20
P A de Silva not out	48
*A Ranatunga c Azharuddin b Chauhan	1
H P Tillekeratne not out	4
Extras (b 2, lb 8, w 4, nb 11)	25
Total (5 wkts)	286

†L K L de Silva, W P U J C Vaas, G P Wickremasinghe and K R Pushpakumara to bat

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-65, 2-180, 3-219, 4-259, 5-269

BOWLING: Srinath 20-1-92-0; Prasad 14-4-28-1; Kuruvilla 13-2-42-0; Kumble 31-14-56-1; Chauhan 24-7-39-3; Ganguly 3-0-19-0

Umpires: A V Jayaprakash (India) and S A Bucknor (West Indies)

Malcolm moves in attempt to reinvigorate Test career

By Our Sports Staff

DEVON MALCOLM ended speculation about his future by joining Northamptonshire from Derbyshire yesterday, and said he saw the move as the first step towards regaining his enthusiasm for cricket after the disappointment of missing out on England's tour of the West Indies.

The 34-year-old fast bowler was left out of the tour party despite reclaiming his England place last summer and featuring in four of the six Testsagainst Australia.

The Jamaican-born Malcolm said that his omission had forced him to examine his career and, following a season of unrest at Derbyshire in the aftermath of a walkout by the captain, Dean Jones, he had decided that the time was right to move on.

Malcolm has signed a three-year contract with Northamptonshire, where he will form a lively pace attack next season alongside his former Derbyshire team-mate, Paul Taylor, and the Australia seamer, Paul Reiffel.

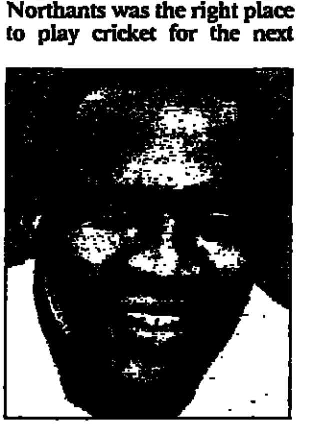
"When I made the decision to move, there were a hell of a lot of things which had to be taken into consideration," Malcolm said. "I had to think of my family and what is going to happen beyond cricket.

"I was looking for extra direction and extra motivation to get myself back into the England side, and I thought Northants was the right place to play cricket for the next three years or so. I've been at Derby for 14 years and had a great time there. The members and the Derby people have shown a lot of affection towards me, but you have to move on and I think now is the right time to do it."

Malcolm's decision signals the end of competition for his services between Northamptonshire and Worcestershire since he became a free agent on November 1 — a situation which intensified after he rejected Derbyshire's offer of a new contract earlier this week.

However, Steve Coverdale, the Northamptonshire chief executive, said: "Although there has been a lot of speculation about other clubs, the contract and everything was agreed several weeks ago, and we are delighted Devon has decided to join Northamptonshire.

"He is perhaps the most popular player in English cricket at the present time, and much admired as a cricketer and personality throughout the world."



Malcolm: three-year deal

Series whitewash in Wasim's sights

By Our Sports Staff

WASIM AKRAM, Pakistan's captain, is determined to complete the first clean sweep over West Indies for 69 years in the third Test starting in Karachi today, his side having gained victories by an innings in the first two games of the series. "It is now an obsession for me," Wasim said.

"It has never happened in 69 years and won't happen this time," promised Courtney Walsh, who could be leading West Indies for the last time. West Indies last lost a series by a 3-0 margin on their 1928 tour of England.

Malcolm Marshall, the coach, with an eye on England's forthcoming visit said: "Most of the batsmen will be playing for their places. The selectors back home won't tolerate any more poor performances."

The touring side will be looking for a greater contribution from Brian Lara whose scores in the first two Tests were three, 37, 15 and one.

Lara's appointment as captain of Warwickshire for next season has run into trouble with a section of the supporters. Members are planning to circulate a petition questioning the way he appeared to be rushed into the job as replacement for Tim Munton.

Dennis Amiss, the chief executive, said: "The reasons behind the club's decision have not been properly chronicled. Next week we will be sending a letter to all members which will set out the club's case. All I would ask is that they look at this before putting their name to any protest."

The petition organisers are concerned that "disagreements within the West Indies side could spread into Warwickshire's dressing-room."

The England Under-19 team's opening tour fixture, against Western Cape Academy, petered out as a draw yesterday, the side settling for batting practice after being set 244 in 44 overs, a prospect deemed unrealistic for players short of match practice. England Under-19 were 109 for four at the close.

GUIDE TO THE WEEKEND FIXTURES

FOOTBALL

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated

COMPLETE MUSIC HELLENIC LEAGUE: Premier division: Almondsbury v Didcot; Carterton v Hallen; Highworth v Abingdon; Kintbury v Banbury; North Leigh v Harrow Hill; Swindon Supermarine v Wantage

WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE: First division: Corinthian v Tunbridge Wells; Herne Bay v Canterbury; Slade Green v Crockenhill

SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE: Premier division: Barnstaple v Chard; Bridgwater v Odd Down; Bridport v Paulton R; Calne v Mangotsfield Utd; Melksham v Bideford; Taunton v Elmore; Tiverton v Brislington; Torrington v Chippenham; Westbury v Keynsham.

MINERVA SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS LEAGUE: Premier division south: Amersham v Brimsdown; Beaconsfield v Hillingdon Boro; Brook House v Ruislip Manor; Hanwell v Cockfosters; Islington v Barkingside; St Margaretsbury v Haringey Boro. Premier division north: Bedford v Hoddesdon; Brache Sparta v Toddington; Harpenden v Biggleswade; Letchworth v Arlesey Town; London Colney v Royston; Potters Bar v Buckingham Athletic; Welwyn Garden v Milton Keynes. O'Brien Butchers Trophy: Third round: Greenacres v Crawley Green; Woodford v Waltham Abbey

SOUTH EAST COUNTIES LEAGUE: First division: Cambridge Utd v West Ham (11.0); Crystal Palace v Southend (11.0); Gillingham v Charlton (11.0); Ipswich v Norwich (11.0); Leyton Orient v Portsmouth (11.0); Millwall v Arsenal (11.0); Queens Park Rangers v Watford (11.0); Tottenham v Fulham (11.0). Second division: Barnet v Tottenham (11.0); Brentford v Wimbledon (11.0); Brighton v Oxford Utd (11.0); Bristol City v Swindon (11.0); Luton v Bristol Rovers (11.0); Reading v Bournemouth (11.0); Wycombe v Southampton (11.0)

ENDSLEIGH MIDLAND COMBINATION: Premier division: Coleshill v Bolehall Swifts; Coventry Sphinx v Cheslyn Hay; David Lloyd AFC v Highgate; Handrahan Timbers v Bilston Community College; Kenilworth v Knowle; Kings Heath v Continental Star; Southam v Alvechurch; Wellesbourne v Dudley Sports; Worcester v Meir KA

SOUTHERN AMATEUR LEAGUE: West Wickham v South Bank Poly; Carshalton v Crouch End Vampires; Lloyds Bank v Polytechnic; Old Actonians v Norsemen; Old Latymerians v Alexandra Park; Midland Bank v Winchmore Hill; Old Esthameians v Barclays Bank; Old Lyonians v Old Owens; Ibis v Merton; Kew Association v Brentham; Broomfield v Alleyn OB; Old Westminster Cits v Southgate Olympic

OLD BOYS LEAGUE: Premier division: Glyn OB v Old Aloysians; Old Suttonians v Old Vaughanians; Old Tenisonians v Old Hamptonians. Senior first division: Chertsey OS v Old Reigatians; Clapham OX v Old Kingsburians

ARTHURIAN LEAGUE: Premier division: Brentwoods v Haberdashers; Carthusians v Cholmeleians. Arthur Dunn Cup: Salopians v Chigwellians; Westminsters v Aldenhamians

NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE: First division: Atherton Collieries v Ramsbottom; Haslingden v Salford; Holker Old Boys v Atherton LR; Rossendale v Mossley; St Helens v Darwen. Cup: Second round: Burscough v Nelson; Castleton Gabriels v Glossop North End; Clitheroe v Vauxhall GM; Garswood v Newcastle Town; Kidsgrove v Chadderton; Maine Road v Blackpool Rovers; Nantwich Town v Prescot Cables; Skelmersdale v Warrington

COURAGE COMBINED COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Chessington and Hook v Sandhurst; Chipstead v Feltham; Cobham v Raynes Park Vale; Hartley Wintney v Bedfont; Merstham v Reading Town; Netherne v Ash; Viking Sports v Godalming and Guildford

ESSEX SENIOR LEAGUE: Premier division: Basildon U v Sawbridgeworth; Bowers v Ilford; Brentwood v Eton Manor; Burnham Ramblers v Hullbridge Sports; Concord Rangers v East Ham; Saffron Walden v Great Wakering; Southend Manor v Stansted

BANKS'S BREWERY LEAGUE. Premier division: Bloxwich S v Darlaston; Brierley Hill T v Gornal A; Cradley Town v Walsall Wood; Kington Town v Lye Town; Stourport S v Ludlow T; Tividale v Ettingshall; Westfields v Bustleholme; Wolverhampton C v Malvern T; Wolverhampton v Stafford T

JEWSON EASTERN COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Bury Town v Woodbridge Town; Ely v Clacton; Felixstowe Port and v Fakenham; Gorleston v Tiptree; Halstead v Harwich and Parkeston; Histon v Diss; Lowestoft v Warboys; Stowmarket v Newmarket; Sudbury W v Great Yarmouth; Watton v Sudbury Tn; Wroxham v Soham.

JEWSON WESSEX LEAGUE: First division: AFC Newbury v Eastleigh; Totton v Aerostructures; Brockenhurst v Gosport; Christchurch v Wimborne; Downton v Lymington; Romsey v Cowes Sports; Thatcham Town v BAT; Whitchurch v Bournemouth

UHLSPORT UNITED COUNTIES LEAGUE: *Premier division:* Bourne v Northampton Spencer; Buckingham v Eynesbury; Cogenhoe v Yaxley; Ford Sports v Spalding; Holbeach v Wellingborough; Long Buckby v Stotfold; Potton v Kempston; St Neots v Boston; Wootton v Mirrlees Blackstone.

UNIJET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE: First division: Arundel v Hailsham; Chichester v Eastbourne Town; Hassocks v Pagham; Littlehampton v Whitehawk; Peacehaven and Telscombe v Portfield; Redhill v Shoreham; Ringmer v Mile Oak; Saltdean v Burgess Hill; Wick v Horsham YMCA. John O'Hara League Cup. Second round: Langney Sports v Selsey

INTERLINK EXPRESS ALLIANCE: Pershore T v Halesowen H. Industrial Rewinds Cup: Second round: Barwell v Pelsall V; Knypersley v Rushall; Chasetown v Kings Norton; Sandwell v Stratford T; Shifnal T v Oldbury U; Wednesfield v Bloxwich Town; Boldmere St Michaels v Bridgnorth; Willenhall v Rocester

NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE: Premier division: Curzon Ashton v Arnold; Eccleshill v Selby; Glasshoughton Welfare v Sheffield; Hallam v Pontefract Cols; Hatfield Main v Pickering; Hucknall Town v Denaby; Liversedge v Armthorpe Welfare; Maltby MW v Brigg Town; North Ferriby v Thackley; Ossett Town v Ossett Albion

RUGBY UNION

International matches

England v New Zealand (at Twickenham, 2.0)

Scotland v South Africa (at *Murrayfield*, 3.0)

Cheltenham and Gloucester Cup

Group A

Gloucester v Fylde (12.30)

Wakefield v West Hartlepool (12.0)

Group B

Exeter v Leicester (3.0)

Rotherham v London Irish (2.15)

Group C

Waterloo v Coventry (2.15)

Group D

Richmond v Bedford (11.0)

Jewson National League

First division

Rugby v Newbury (3.0)

Second division north

Manchester v Sandal (2.15)

SOUTH WEST: First division: Gloucester Old Boys v Torquay; Maidenhead v Penzance-Newlyn.

TETLEY'S BITTER COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP: North: Pool A: Cumbria v Warwickshire (at Aspatria, 2.30); Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and Derbyshire v Durham (at Newark, 2.30). Pool B: Leicestershire v North Midlands (at Stoneygate, 2.30). Pool C: East Midlands v Staffordshire (at Northampton, 2.30); Yorkshire v Northumberland (at Otley, 2.15). South: Pool A. Sussex v Eastern Counties (at Lewes, 2.15). Pool B: Dorset and Wiltshire v Hertfordshire (at Salisbury, 2.30). *Pool C:* Hampshire v Surrey (at US Portsmouth, 2.15). Pool D: Middlesex v Somerset (at Staines, 2.30).

ROYAL AND SUN ALLIANCE COLTS COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP: Final: Gloucestershire v North Midlands (at Twickenham, 12.0)

Welsh League

Premier division

Bridgend v Swansea (2.0)

Llanelli v Ebbw Vale (2.0)

Neath v Pontypridd (2.0)

Newport v Cardiff (6.0)

First division

Aberavon v Newbridge (2.0)

Abertillery v Dunvant (2.0)

Bonymaen v Blackwood (2.0)

Caerphilly v South Wales Police (2.0)

Cross Keys v Rumney (2.0)

Maesteg v Treorchy (2.30)

Merthyr v Llandovery (2.0)

Cardiff Institute v Pontypool (2.0)

SECOND DIVISION: Kenfig Hill v Abercynon; Tondu v Whitland; Llanharan v St Peter's; Tredegar v Pyle; Mountain Ash v Tenby Utd.

SWALEC CUP: Third round: Carmarthen Quins v Cwmgwrach; Narberth v Brynmawr.

AIB League

First division

Blackrock College v Lansdowne (2.30)

Dolphin v Garryowen (2.30)

Dungannon v Cork Constitution (2.30)

Old Belvedere v Ballymena (2.30)

Terenure College v St Mary's College (2.30)

Young Munster v Clontarf (2.30)

Second division

DLSP v Galwegians (2.30)

Derry v Buccaneers (2.30)

Greystones v Old Wesley (2.30)

Instonians v Bective Rangers (2.30)

Malone v Monkstown (2.30)

Wanderers v Skerries (2.30)

CLUB MATCHES: Birmingham/Solihull v Bromsgrove (2.30); Plymouth v Berry Hill (2.30); Redruth v St Ives (2.30); Rosslyn Park v Walsall (12.0); Sheffield v Nottingham (2.30); Stourbridge v Worcester (2.30); Weston-super-Mare v Launceston (3.0).

RUGBY LEAGUE

Kick-off 2.0 unless stated

SILK CUT CHALLENGE CUP: First round: Broughton RR v Hull Dockers; Dewsbury Moor v Dublin; Eccles v Featherstone Lions; Ellenborough v Crosfields; Farnworth ROB v Lowca; Ideal ABI v Hunslet Warriors; John Moores University v Eastmoor; Leigh East v East Hull; London Skolars v Myton Warriors; Milford v Queens; Millom v York Acorn; Moldgreen v Barrow Island; New Earswick v BRK; Norland v Westfield Hotel; Normanton v Folly Lane; Oulton v Loughborough University; Ovenden v Dodworth; Queensbury v East Leeds; Redhill v Wigan St Jude's; Shaw Cross v Clayton; Siddal v Lindley; Stanningley v Nottingham; Teesside v Leeds University; Waterhead v Westgate Redoubt; West Bowling v Thornhill; Worth Village v Fulham Travellers; *John Moores University v Eastmoor.*

NATIONAL CONFERENCE LEAGUE: *Premier division:* Haworth v Mayfield (2.30); Leigh Miners v Oldham St Anne's (2.30); Saddleworth v Dudley Hill (2.30); Walney Central v Beverley; West Hull v Askam (2.30); Wigan St Patrick's v Lock Lane (2.30); Woolston v Egremont (2.30).

HOCKEY

NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Cannock v Barford Tigers (at Morris Ground, 1.0); Doncaster v Beeston (at Bennetthorpe, 1.30); Old Loughtonians v Canterbury (at Chigwell, 2.0); Reading v Guildford (at Sonning Lane, 2.0); Southgate v Hounslow (at Trent Park, 2.0); Teddington v East Grinstead (at Reeds School, Oxshott, 2.0). First division: St Albans v Bournville (at Clarence Park, 1.30).

ESL SOUTH LEAGUE: Premier League: Anchorians v Richmond; Chichester v Trojans; Eastcote v Winchester; Herne Bay v Fareham; High Wycombe v Tunbridge Wells; Maidenhead v Gore Court; Old Whitgiftians v City of Portsmouth; Purley v Beckenham; Wimbledon v Ramgarhia; Woking v Bournemouth. Hampshire/Surrey: Blandford v Basingstoke; Camberley v London University; Cheam v Old Georgians; Dulwich v Spencer; Goan v Oxshott; Old Walcountians v Epsom; Old Cranleighans v Haslemere; Oxted v Old Mid-Whitgiftians; Portsmouth v Barnes. Kent/Sussex: BBHC v Bexley Invicta; Folkestone v Ashford; Horsham v Worthing; Marden Russets v Brighton; Middleton-Bognor v Blackheath; Mid Sussex v Eastbourne; Old Bordenians v Burnt Ash; Old Holcombeians v Lloyds Bank; Old Williamsonians v Tulse Hill; Sevenoaks v Newhaven. Middx/Berks/Bucks and Oxon: Ashford v Amersham; Farnham Common v Staines; Hayes v Hendon; Lions v Bracknell; Marlow v Sunbury; Milton Keynes v City of Oxford; PHC Chiswick v Old Kingstonians; Phoenix v Wokingham; Richings Park v Newbury; West Hampstead v Gerrards Cross.

DTZ DEBENHAM THORPE MIDLAND LEAGUE: Premier division: Bloxwich v Coventry and North Warwicks; Hampton-in-Arden v Nottingham; Harborne v Khalsa; North: Notts v Edgbaston; Northampton Saints v North Stafford; Olton and West Warwicks v Blossomfield.

NORTHERN LEAGUE: First division: Chester v Norton; Formby v Durham University; Harrogate v Southport; Sheffield Bankers v Neston; Timperley v Ben Rhydding; Wigan v Swalwell

ADNAMS EAST LEAGUE: Premier division A: *Bishop's Stortford* v Crostyx; Cambridge University v Cambridge City; Clacton v Peterborough Tn; Luton Town v Colchester; Sudbury v Ipswich. Premier division B: Bedford v *Dereham*; Bury St Edmunds v Old Southendian; Redbridge and Ilford v Ipswich and East Suffolk; St Ives v Romford; West Herts v Norwich City

WEST OF ENGLAND AND SOUTH WALES LEAGUE: Premier division: Bath Buccaneers v Exeter University; Bristol University v Weston-super-Mare; Cheltenham v Whitchurch; Clevedon v Robinsons; Swansea v Taunton Vale

WOMEN'S NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Hightown v Sutton Coldfield (at Greenbank HS, 11.45); Olton Terraquest v Ipswich (2.0); Doncaster v Slough (at Bennetthorpe, 11.30); Clifton Scottish Life v Trojans (at Baggar Bush, 12.30). First division: Loughborough Students v Bracknell (2.30); Bradford Swithenbank v Chelmsford Highway (12.0); Sunderland Bedans v Canterbury (11.30), Wimbledon v Leicester (12.0). Second division: Woking Swifts v Ealing (12.30), Sherwood v Poynton (12.0); Aldridge v Old Loughtonians (2.0); West Witney v Bluehearts (12.0)

WOMEN'S REGIONAL LEAGUES: East: Harleston v Sevenoaks. Midlands: Belper v Luton; Hampton-in-Arden v Kettering; Leicester v Pickwick; North Staffs v Crimson Ramblers. West: Bournemouth v Taunton Vale, Leominster v Cheltenham; Redland v Exmouth; St Austell v Colwall; Yate v Exeter

OTHER SPORT

BASKETBALL: Budweiser League: Derby Storm v London Leopards (7.30).

BOXING: World Boxing Council international super-middleweight championship: H Graham (Sheffield, holder) v V Paziena (US). Commonwealth super-middleweight championship (vacant): D Starie (Ipswich) v M Baker (Sidcup). WBC international super-bantamweight championship: P Mullings (Harrow, holder), v H Horan (Russ) (all at Wembley Arena)

ICE HOCKEY: Benson and Hedges Cup: Final: Cardiff Devils v Ayr Scottish Eagles (at Sheffield, 7.0). Benson and Hedges Plate: Final: Telford Tigers v Slough Jets (3.0).

LACROSSE: Shepherds Friendly Society League: Premier division: Heaton Mersey v Stockport; Poynton v Hulmeians; Cheadle v Timperley; Boardman and Eccles v Old Waconians; Mellor v Cheadle Hulme.

ROWING: Thames world sculling challenge (3.30)

TOMORROW

RUGBY UNION

Kick-off 2.0 unless stated

TETLEY'S BITTER COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP: North: Pool B: Cheshire v Lancashire (at Sale, 2.30). South: Pool B: Gloucestershire v Berkshire (at Lydney, 2.30). Pool D: Devon v Oxfordshire (at Barnstaple, 2.30); Kent v Buckinghamshire (at Dover)

SRU TENNENTS VELVET CUP: Fourth round: Aberdeen GSFP v Glasgow Hawks; Biggar v Kilmarnock; East Kilbride v Dundee HSFP; Edinburgh Academicals v Dalziel; Hawick v Langholm; Heriot's FP v Annan; Jed-Forest v Garnock; Kirkcaldy v Trinity Academicals; Linlithgow v Boroughmuir; Melrose v Grangemouth; Murrayfield v Kelso Musselburgh v Currie; Peebles v Gala; Stirling County v Gordonians; Strathendrick v Watsonians; West of Scotland v Glasgow Southern

AIB League

First division

Old Crescent v Shannon (2.30)

Second division

Sunday's Well v UCC (2.30)

CLUB MATCH: Henley v Reading

HOCKEY

NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Beeston v Barford Tigers (at Highfields, Nottingham, 2.30); Doncaster v Cannock (at Bennetthorpe, 2.0); East Grinstead v Hounslow (at Saint Hill, 2.30); Guildford v Canterbury (at King's Manor School, 12.0); Old Loughtonians v Reading (at Chigwell, 2.0); Teddington v Southgate (at Lensbury Club, 2.30). First division: Blueharts v Harleston Magpies (at Hitchin Boys School, 2.0); Bournville v Gloucester City (at King Edward's Girls' School, Birmingham, 12.30). Bromley v Firebrand (at Priory Leisure Centre, Orpington, 1.0), Brooklands v Surbiton (at Georges Road, Sale, 2.0); Chelmsford v Warrington (at Chelmer Park, 1.0); Hull v Loughborough Students (at Dane Park Road, 2.0); Indian Gymkhana v Havant (at Thornbury Avenue, Isleworth, 2.0). Lewes v St Albans (at Southdown Club, 1.30). Oxford Hawks v Oxford University (at Banbury Road, 2.0); Sheffield v Hampstead and Westminster (at Abbeydale Park, 2.0)

OTHER SPORT

BASKETBALL: Budweiser League: Crystal Palace v Birmingham Bullets (6.0); Sheffield Sharks v Worthing Bears (6.0); London Towers v Thames Valley Tigers (6.30). Uniball Trophy: Group stage: Chester Jets v Manchester Giants (5.30).

CYCLING: South of England senior cyclo-cross championship (at Southampton Sports Centre, 1.45)

ICE HOCKEY: Superleague: Basingstoke Bison v Newcastle Cobras (6.0); Nottingham Panthers v Cardiff Devils (7.0).

هكذا من الأصل

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NETBALL

Murtagh eager to end poor tradition

Heavey learns new steps to dance with Devils

Alan Lee meets a Scotsman leading a Welsh ice hockey club to Sheffield for the first cup final of the season tonight

In its urgent quickstep to the beat of a modern entertainment package, ice hockey has become Americanised on and off the rink. Remarkably, only one of the eight Superleague clubs now employs a British coach, a Scotsman exiled in Wales with a contentment that falls far short of complacency.

The state of Paul Heavey's right hand, encased in padding and bandages, is testimony to the tensions of his job. "Officially, it was a do-it-yourself accident in the garage at home," he said ruefully. Unofficially, it was a sharp object on the dressing-room wall that ripped Heavey's hand open as he expressed his frustration with his team at Sheffield a fortnight ago.

Heavey will be back at Sheffield tonight, supervising Cardiff Devils in the showpiece Benson and Hedges Cup final against Ayr Scottish Eagles. He intends to keep his one good hand in his pocket this time, though the ever increasing demand for results will doubtless be betrayed by his keen-eyed face.

"This is a commercial game now and everyone wants a return on their investment," he said. "The sport has been transformed in only a few years and the coaches are under constant pressure to produce. That pressure can only grow and I can see a lot more being fired in the years to come."

Heavey may be an alien in his own land, amid the rush for transatlantic coaches, but he is not a candidate for such treatment while Cardiff continue to prosper. Superleague champions last season, they are now aiming to win the Benson and Hedges for the first time since the inaugural final in 1992, when the captain lifting the trophy was none other than the present coach.

He had no wish to stop playing. Indeed, when the decision was forced upon him in 1994, following serious injuries to knee and foot, he found it hard to accept. "It was a big shock and it required a lot of soulsearching," he said. At 32, he did not feel ready for the long-planned move into coaching and even on succeeding John Lawless in charge of Cardiff, a year later, the adjustment was complicated.

"When you've played with a set of guys for four years and you've suddenly got to direct, control and criticise them, it comes hard. I found watching very difficult and, for a year, I ended every game screaming, hollering and kicking things. I think I am better now, despite this," he said with another glance at the mummified hand.

Cardiff are sponsored by BT and their catchphrase, "It's good to talk", certainly applies to Heavey. A natural communicator, he sat back in his modest basement office this week and reflected on his origins in the game as a teenager in Glasgow.

"Skating was on our school curriculum and I grew to enjoy it so much that I would get to the public rink at seven o'clock every Saturday morning just to be at the front of the queue when the doors opened at nine. That way, I always got the pick of the boots and, one day, when a mate smuggled me in the back door, I met the local hockey team."

From Glasgow Dynamos, Heavey graduated to Murrayfield, where he spent five years. The 1980s game could not support professionals and he doubled up working as a stage hand in a Glasgow production company. Spells with Solihull and Peterborough followed, but the high points were to come when he moved to Cardiff in 1991. "It was a chance of security, something I had to seek with a wife and a new baby. Cardiff were the new team on the block and, at the time, this was one of the best rinks."

He knows this applies no longer. Cardiff's capacity is only 2,500 and they boast none of the spectator-friendly facilities enjoyed by Manchester and Sheffield. A move to a purpose-built ice stadium in Cardiff Bay is, as yet, no more than a hopeful proposal. Heavey, however, is used to making do.

"When I started as coach after John Lawless left, the marketing and sales people had gone, even the secretary. There was nothing here but filing cabinets and the administration took up so much time I was often preparing practice sessions at midnight."

The Devils are a bigger, slicker operation now. A team manager, Andy French, frees Heavey for playing affairs. The club had to change because the game was moving so fast and, while Heavey revels in the competitive environment that was beyond imagination when he played, his reservations are profound.

"Superleague is here to stay and it is an exciting concept, especially now that all the clubs are capable of beating each other. But I have only two British players on my roster and some teams have even fewer. It's a situation we have to address with a five-year or ten-year plan.

"The heightened profile of hockey is getting the kids interested but they must have a realistic chance of achieving their goals and reaching the top level, or they will just give up. I think the league below us, the British League, should act as more of a feeder and impose limitations on foreign players."

The plea comes heartfelt from a man closely involved with the Great Britain team that will contest the world championships in May. For now, though, Heavey's attentions are on domestic matters and a weekend that exposes the demands of the transformed game. There will be no scope to celebrate or commiserate after the cup final. Tomorrow, Cardiff must fight for precious points at the Superleague leaders, Nottingham.

HUW EVANS

Heavey and the Devils — "This is a commercial game now and everyone wants a return on their investment," he says

Eagles promise to avoid stage fright

By Norman de Mesquita

AYR Scottish Eagles and Cardiff Devils, on their day, are the two best teams in the Superleague and their meeting in the final of the Benson and Hedges Cup at the Sheffield Arena tonight should be a game to relish.

The Devils won the competition in 1992, the first year of the present sponsorship, and have been runners-up once since. The Eagles reached the final last year, but gave a disappointing display against Nottingham Panthers. Perhaps they were so pleased to have qualified in their debut season that the occasion proved too much for them. Their coach, Jim Lynch, is certain that no such problem will affect them this time.

Lynch is a no-frills coach who stresses the importance of hard work and adherence to a proven game-plan. His team has no one outstanding player but has four forward lines, all of which are given roughly the same amount of ice-time, and all of which are likely to score goals.

There has been one significant change to the team recently. Darren Colbourne, who scored nine goals in his first seven appearances for the club, then went 16 games without finding the net, has been replaced by John Parco, who has two goals and three assists in his first three games.

The Devils, while also boasting all-round strength, have a forward line capable of winning any game. The speed of Ivan Matulik, the work-rate of Steve Thornton and subtle skills of Ken Hodge complement each other perfectly and Ayr will be aware of the danger that they pose.

It could all come down to goaltending. Rob Dopson is clearly first-choice for the Eagles and will certainly play. Frank Caprice and Derek Herlofsky have shared the goaltending duties for the Devils — at least until a 6-3 loss to Basingstoke Bison two weeks ago, since when Caprice has played in four consecutive games. He looks likely to get the nod today.

ROWING

Haining left high and dry by illness

By Mike Rosewell

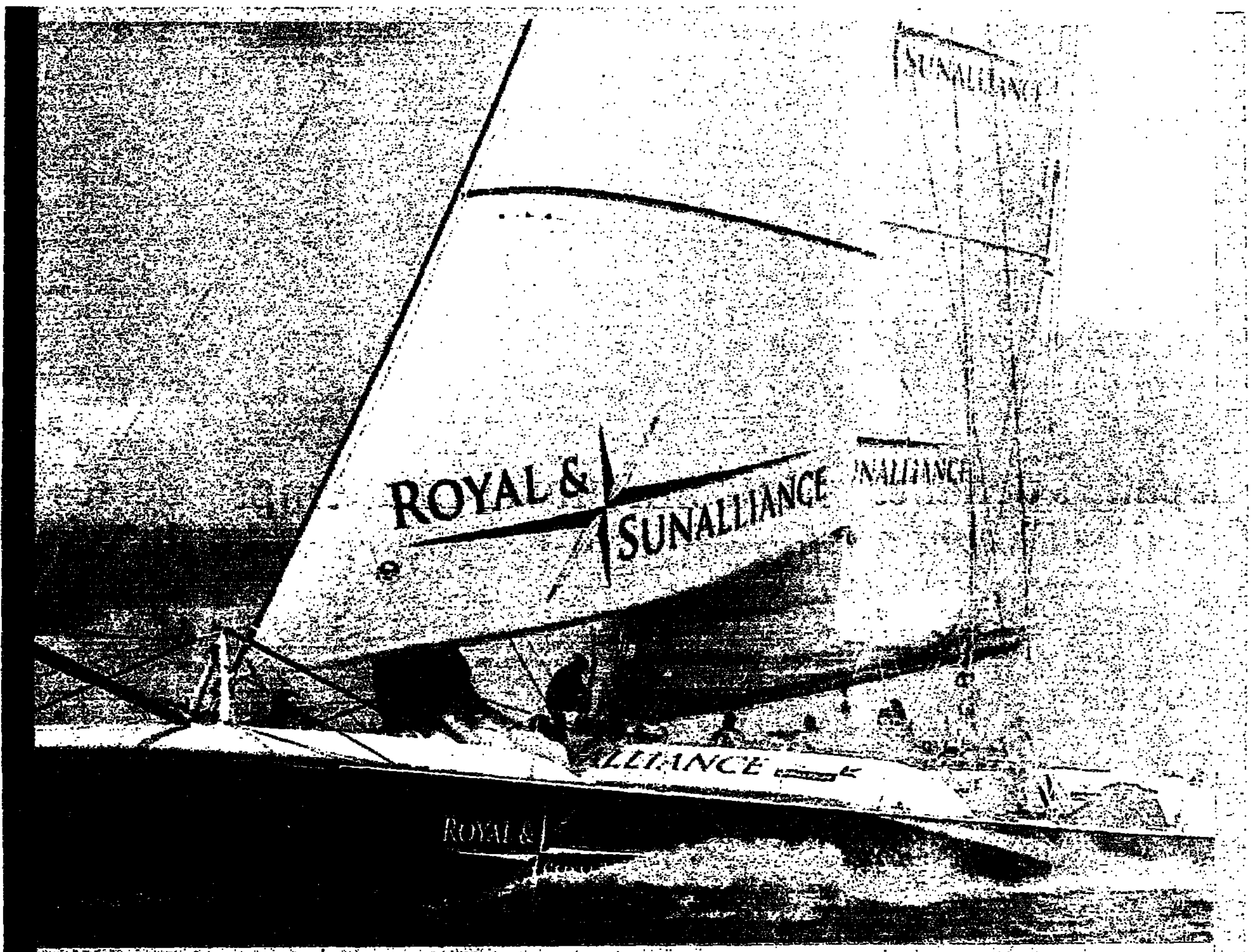
PETER HAINING, founder and twice the winner of the Thames World Sculling Challenge, will miss the Putney to Mortlake race, the fifth in the series, today. Haining, the world lightweight champion from 1993 to 1995, has been beset with illness this year and will be the umpire for an event justly billed "a race of champions".

The qualifications for entry are straightforward; a competitor must have won either an Olympic or world title, won the Diamond Sculls at Henley or the Scullers Head, or be the holder of the Thames World Sculling Challenge trophy. Five with this pedigree are in the race today.

British hopes will rest on Greg Searle and Martin Kettle. Searle, an Olympic rowing champion in 1992, switched to sculling a year ago and won the Henley Diamonds and a world sculling bronze medal this summer. Kettle, who did not achieve selection for the world championships, won the Scullers Head and Wingfield Sculls this year. Kettle has plenty of experience in competitive sculling on the difficult championship course; Searle has very little.

International competition comes from the 6ft 7in Merlin Vervoorn, of Holland, who took the title from Haining in 1996 when he also won the Diamonds. The multiple world champion, Giovanni Calabrese, of Italy, last entered the race in 1995 when Haining beat him. Calabrese qualifies again this year as a member of Italy's 1997 world champion quad scull.

The smallest man in the race is Karsten Nielsen, from Denmark, who took on the mantle of world lightweight champion from Haining in 1996. Karsten raced in the Challenge last year, but finished third behind Vervoorn and Haining. An early lead in such a field may prove to be decisive.



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RACING: BOOKING OF DUNWOODY CATCHES THE EYE IN COMPETITIVE HANDICAP

Princeful can be king of the hill

HUGH ROUTLEDGE

Oatis Regrets clears the last to win the Bovis Lelliott Handicap Chase at Sandown yesterday as Arfer Mole and Carl Llewellyn take a crashing fall

By Richard Evans
Racing Correspondent

PRINCEFUL, lightly weighted and with more than a touch of class, looks a value bet at around 10-1 in the William Hill Hurdle at Sandown today — especially as Richard Dunwoody has been booked to ride.

Jenny Pitman has always held the gelding in the highest regard. At the start of last season, she told visitors to her open day: "We know he's got an engine and hope he makes into a Cheltenham horse come March 1997."

RICHARD EVANS

NAP: PRINCEFUL
(3.05 Sandown Park)
Next best: Revolt
(12.40 Wetherby)

And so it proved, as Princeful followed up two victories by finishing second to Shadow Leader in the Supreme Novices' Hurdle last March. That form reads particularly well and there was much to like about his seasonal reappearance at Ascot 15 days ago, especially as the race was not run to suit him.

Despite a slow pace and a stumble on a path near the home turn, the topweight stayed on well to be second. Given that he is a stuffy horse who needs plenty of work to gain full fitness, there is every reason to expect considerable improvement today.

Dunwoody, who does not ride many of the Pitman horses, is a fascinating booking especially as he could have chosen Alabang — arguably the form choice of the race — whom he partnered at Wetherby seven weeks ago when second to the progressive Good Vibes.

With Good Vibes winning again at Aintree, the well-regarded Alabang certainly comes into the reckoning. The stronger pace this afternoon will suit Maurice Camacho's runner, but his relative lack of experience — reflected in some moderate hurdling last time — may count against him.

In a typically competitive race, Carlito Brigante has sound claims, having won the Imperical Cup over course and distance. However, he hails from a yard without a winner from almost 40 runners in the past seven weeks.

Stormyfairweather has attracted support after a smooth success at Newbury eight days ago but that victory came in a slowly run race and the Nicky Henderson runner must improve again to follow up.

Although Grimes is considered a Champion Hurdle contender, the handicapper has taken no chances with him and **Princeful** is the choice.

Klairon Davis could be worth opposing at short odds in the Mitsubishi Shogun Tingle Creek Chase over these demanding fences. Although the Irish raider won on his seasonal reappearance, the 1996 Queen Mother Champion Chase winner is usually at his best in the spring.

Viking Flagship, who had a hard race behind One Man at Huntingdon last time, could struggle to confirm Exeter form with Mulligan over this shorter trip. However, the two David Nicholson runners may find **Or Royal** a hard nut to crack. His third to Simply Dashing at Ascot two weeks ago was a sound effort and Martin Pipe's runner should be even more effective over the minimum trip.

Away from the gaze of the television cameras, **Revolt** looks worth an interest in the Steve Humbles Birthday Novices Hurdle at Wetherby (12.40). From the in-form Tim Easterby yard, the well-regarded five-year-old looked likely to make a winning reappearance at the Yorkshire track 18 days ago but blundered badly two flights from home. In effect, he is a winner without a penalty.

Hurricane Lamp primed to illuminate Sandown

CHEPSTOW
BBC1

1.15: Jet Rules, who put up his best performance here two years ago in the Persian War Hurdle, may get outpaced back at this trip but goes well with cut in the ground, which could not be said with confidence of Secret Service. Miss Roberto should improve for this step up in distance, but this is familiar territory for **Lough Tully**, who improved in the spring and then caught a tartar on his reappearance here. Dashing Dollar has yet to match his Irish form.

1.45: Giventime, who shaped well over an inadequate trip at Kempton on his reappearance, could resume the improvement that last season saw him run up two legs of a treble over this course and distance; at the weights, however, he will have to. **Little Martina** ran well on too sharp a track when not yet at peak fitness at Warwick last time. Last season she confirmed herself a thorough stayer and could find some improvement. Turning Trix remains fairly treated and goes well fresh, but Killeshin and River Mandate can be expected to need the run. Dom Samourai ran well at Haydock last time but is inconsistent. A N C Express is not without a chance.

2.15: See More Business has a touch of class but carries a corresponding burden, and his relative inexperience over fences produced the errors which marred a fine comeback effort behind Suny Bay at Haydock (a ring-rusty Earth Summit behind). **Indian Tracker** is on trial for the Coral Welsh National here and while he, too, lacks experience, he could prove well treated. He ran well for a long way at the Cheltenham Festival, and his dashing style could see him flourish this winter. Banjo bounced back to his best on his return, thanks in part to a brilliant ride from Adrian Maguire. It is easy to knock holes in that form, while Air Shot, his stablemate, needs to become more fluent at his fences. Greenhill Tare Away could go well at a price.

Chris McGrath

TODAY'S RACES ON TELEVISION

SANDOWN PARK
CHANNEL 4

1.55: Space Trucker was the best of these over hurdles, but his best form has been on a sounder surface. Despite being worse off at the weights, Queen Of Spades should confirm Cheltenham form with Direct Route. However, **Hurricane Lamp** is a fascinating chasing newcomer. Two victories over hurdles last term were a bonus, as he has always looked as though he would be better over fences.

2.30 and 3.05: see left.

3.40: Sofyaan had no chance against Sanmartino, Whip Hand and Ela Agapi Mou at Newbury but still managed to take them along to the second-last flight. Previously, he won two novice events and he should relish this drop in class. Diego, runner-up to the in-form Saint Ciel at Uttoxeter last time, looks best of the rest.

Richard Evans

WOLVERHAMPTON
CHANNEL 4

2.45: **State Of Caution** has gone up 16lb for his last three wins but can improve again to defy the handicapper. He is well drawn. Chewit returns to his best trip and his third to Farmost last time is smart form. Forcing Bid won impressively last time over a shorter distance but has a difficult draw to overcome.

3.20: The Norwegian challenger Loch Bering was beaten under four lengths by Prince Of Andros in this last year, when he stumbled at the start. He has reportedly improved and will make a bold bid. Farmost has to be the choice though, given the manner in which he defied a wide draw in a hot handicap here last time. That came from a mark of only 82, but he is improving fast and an extra furlong will be right up his street. Running Stag has form in group company on turf and goes well on sand, but fails to go through with his effort.

James Willoughby

WOLVERHAMPTON

THUNDERER
12.35 Chadleigh Lane. 1.05 Sada. 1.35 I'm Tef. 2.10 Gold Clipper. 2.40 Astrac. 3.20 Running Stag. 3.55 Rex Mundi. 4.25 Private Audience.

GOING. STANDARD DRAW: NO ADVANTAGE SIS

12.35 ANGLO HOLT CONSTRUCTION HANDICAP
(Div I: £1,944: 1m 1f 79yd) (13 runners)

1	(9)	0106	PERPETUAL LIGHT 14J (CD) J J Quinn 4-9-12	R Winston (5)	65
2	(1)	-020	ASHGORE 149 (C,F,G) T Caldwell 7-9-11	M Fenton	54
3	(6)	20/0	RESERVATION ROCK 261 R Simpson 6-9-9	M Gallagher	34
4	(3)	5100	FLASHTALKIN' FLOOD 52 (S) C Dwyer 3-9-8	D Holland	60
5	(8)	0040	FLOTILLA 126 S Mellor 3-9-5	M Wigham	54
6	(7)	3115	BAPSFORD 15 (C) M Waring 3-9-4	A Clark	59
7	(10)	6051	CONFRONTER 11 (F,G,S) S Dow 8-9-4	T Quinn	54
8	(2)	4060	TABASCO JAZZ 46 B Meehan 3-9-0	M Tebbutt	67
9	(5)	4030	CHADLEIGH LANE 12 (C) R Mulholland 5-8-10	T Lucas	60
10	(12)	0000	NORTHERN FAN 12 (C) N Tinkler 5-8-8	Dean McKeown	52
11	(13)	3001	ON THE GREEN 45 (V,F) B Preece 4-8-6	Dale Gibson	61
12	(4)	0050	MAZEED 15 (V,F) P Evans 4-8-6	A McCarthy (7)	53
13	(11)	0316	CABCHARGE BLUE 33 (F,S) T Naughton 5-8-5	R Ffrench (3)	51

5-2 Confronter, 5-1 Bapsford, 7-1 Flashtalkin' Flood, On The Green, 8-1 Perpetual Light, 10-1 Cabcharge Blue 12-1 Ashgore. 14-1 others.

1.05 HOLIDAY INN GARDEN COURT WOLVERHAMPTON MAIDEN STAKES (2-Y-O: £3,219: 6f) (13)

1	(13)	0	DESERT MIRAGE 60 P Chapple-Hyam 9-0	T Quinn	–
2	(2)		DRYAD N Littmoden 9-0	S Whitworth	–
3	(6)	24	KILLARNEY JAZZ 50 J Wharton 9-0	T Lucas	50
4	(5)	0	MUSALSE 29 P Haslam 9-0	P Goode (7)	–
5	(8)		POLAR MIST M Prescott 9-0	G Duffield	–
6	(12)	00	TAJ MAHAL 19 C Thornton 9-0	Dean McKeown	24
7	(10)	0250	WOLFHUNT 42 P Makin 9-0	D Holland	40
8	(11)	4	INDIAN SPLENDOUR 26 R Guest 8-9	R Ffrench (3)	55
9	(1)	04	LITTLE EMILY 8 C Britton 8-9	W J O'Connor	56
10	(7)	0062	PHANTOM RING 26 A Bailey 8-9	J Bosley (7)	59
11	(3)	3043	SADA 26 C Dwyer 8-9	F Lynch	66
12	(9)	0	SHARWAY LADY 21 B McMahon 8-9	L Newton	30
13	(4)	00	TREBLE TERM 40 P Makin 8-9	A Clark	–

11-4 Sada, 9-2 Wolfhunt, 5-1 Polar Mist, 6-1 Desert Mirage, 7-1 Phantom Ring, 10-1 Killarney Jazz, 12-1 Treble Term, 20-1 others.

1.35 MANCHESTER SELLING STAKES
(2-Y-O: £1,999: 6f) (10)

1	(6)	5300	FIGAWIN 12 (D) S Dow 9-2	P Doe (7)	49
2	(3)	00	BURNDEN DAYS 39 Miss J Craze 8-11	S Webster	43
3	(9)	0000	HOUSE ON FIRE 26 J Berry 8-11	P Roberts (3)	50
4	(1)	0024	I'M TEF 30 (BF) T Easterby 8-11	R Winston (5)	54
5	(4)	0620	VELVET STORY 113 P Evans 8-11	A McCarthy (7)	48
6	(8)	0026	DANCE TO THE BEAT 12 (B,BF) M Meade 8-6	Dean McKeown	53
7	(2)	0000	MAGGICE 22 R Hollinshead 8-6	G Duffield	30
8	(10)	5400	PINUP 12 C Dwyer 8-6	D Holland	27
9	(7)	0000	RIVER FRONTIER 61 M Usher 8-6	J Marshall	28
10	(5)	5604	SING FOR ME 7 R Hollinshead 8-6	N Carlisle	38

13-8 Dance To The Beat, 3-1 I'm Tef, 7-2 Velvet Story, 7-1 Sing For Me, 8-1 House On Fire, Pinup, 20-1 Figawin River Frontier, 25-1 others.

2.10 ANGLO HOLT CONSTRUCTION HANDICAP
(£1,944: 1m 1f 79yd) (13)

1	(6)	3652	ROUND ROBIN 119 C Thornton 3-9-12	Dean McKeown	54
2	(1)	0000	CAMBRIDGE BLUE 152 I Semple 3-9-9	M Tebbutt	40
3	(9)	0124	ALFAHAAL 11 (F,S) C Dwyer 4-9-8	G Parkin (3)	64
4	(12)	0644	SEA SPOUSE 12 (S) M Blanshard 6-9-7	Dale Gibson	58
5	(7)	210/	SALTZ 831 (F) P Dalton 5-9-4	C Lowther (3)	–
6	(4)	3000	ZERMATT 12 (B,F,S) M Usher 7-9-4	M Rimmer	63
7	(10)	5002	HAYDN JAMES 23 (B) P Harris 3-9-2	D Holland	62
8	(11)	2304	FAILED TO HIT 19 (B,F) N Littmoden 4-8-11	S Whitworth	60
9	(2)	3046	PATINA 19 R Hollinshead 3-8-8	F Lynch	54
10	(3)	0261	JUBILEE SCHOLAR 11 (B) G L Moore 4-8-7	F Norton	70
11	(5)	00-0	RETOTO 30 (G) B McMath 3-8-6	N Carlisle	45
12	(8)	0023	GOLD CLIPPER 11 (BF) M Ryan 3-8-6	D Biggs	65
13	(13)	0105	UP IN FLAMES 12 (D,F,G) S Bowring 6-8-4	R Ffrench (3)	64

3-1 Gold Clipper, 5-1 Alfahaal, 6-1 Jubilee Scholar, 7-1 Round Robin, 8-1 Sea Spouse, Haydn James, 10-1 Failed To Hit, Up In Flames, 20-1 others.

2.45 TOTE JACKPOT HANDICAP
C4
(£6,970: 7f) (12)

1	(4)	6053	CHEWIT 21 (D,F,G) G L Moore 5-10-0	C Lowther (3)	101
2	(1)	0111	STATE OF CAUTION 35 (V,CD) D Shaw 4-9-13	J Fanning	106
3	(10)	5301	PRIMO LARA 32 (D,F,G) P Harris 5-9-5	T Quinn	100
4	(12)	0001	FORCING BID 21 (B,C) M Prescott 3-9-4	G Duffield	103
5	(8)	1006	GAELIC STORM 32 (F,G,S) M Johnston 3-9-3	D Holland	99
6	(9)	0550	ASTRAC 28 (D,F,S) N Tinkler 6-9-3	Kim Tinkler	105
7	(2)	5412	TWIN CREEKS 26 (BF,D,F) V Soane 6-8-13	R Perham	103
8	(11)	0002	SEA-DEER 15 (C,F,G,S) C Dwyer 8-8-12	F Lynch	101
9	(3)	6310	MR MAJICA 49 (B,F) B Meehan 3-8-10	M Tebbutt	90
10	(6)	4063	BRILLIANT RED 35 (D,F) P Hedger 4-8-9	A Clark	98
11	(5)	4003	MR BERGERAC 21 (C,F,G,S) B Palling 6-8-6	M Henry (3)	97
12	(7)	0044	JIBEREEN 28 (CD,F,G,S) P Howling 5-8-4	S Whitworth	90

7-2 State Of Caution, 6-1 Brilliant Red, 13-2 Primo Lara. 7-1 Forcing Bid. 8-1 Chewit, Twin Creeks, 10-1 Mr Bergerac, 12-1 others.

FORM FOCUS Chewit 2½l 3rd of 13 to Farmost in handicap here (1m 100yd, AW). State Of Caution beat Sir Joey 1½l in 12-runner handicap here (7f, AW) with Astrac (7lb better off) 3l 5th and Mr Bergerac (10lb better off) 10l 10th. Primo Lara beat Double Splendour ¾l in 25-runner handicap at Redcar (6f, good) with Gaelic Storm (6lb better off) 2l 6th, Mr Bergerac (13lb better off) 2¾l 9th and Sea-Deer (5lb better off) 5l 11th. Forcing Bid beat Eastern Prophets 5l in 13-runner handicap here (6f, AW) with Mr Bergerac (13lb better off) 6¾l 3rd. Twin Creeks 1½l 2nd of 11 to Puzzlement in handicap at Lingfield (1m, AW). Sea-Deer neck 2nd of 12 to The Happy Fox in claiming stakes here (6f, AW). Brilliant Red ½l 3rd of 28 to Consort in handicap at Newmarket (1m, good to firm) with Chewit (24lb worse off) 2¾l 5th.

STATE OF CAUTION, one of the best here, can defy the handicapper

3.20 WULFRUN STAKES
C4
(Listed race: £31,086: 1m 1f 79yd) (7)

1	(7)	3230	CENTRE STALLS 70 (F,G,S) R J-Houghton 4-9-1	T Quinn	144
2	(4)	4111	LOCH BERING 33 (G,S) A Lund (Nor) 5-9-1	M Larsen	120
3	(1)	1121	FARMOST 21 (CD,F,S) M Prescott 4-8-13	G Duffield	104
4	(6)	3140	RUSSIAN MUSIC 63 (F) Gay Kelleway 4-8-13	R Ffrench	127
5	(2)	0610	PRINCE OF DENIAL 35 (D,F,G,S) D Arbuthnot 3-8-11	S Whitworth	118
6	(3)	0511	PUZZLEMENT 11 (CD) C Brittain 3-8-11	W J O'Connor	106
7	(5)	4242	RUNNING STAG 11 (BF) P Mitchell 3-8-11	A Clark	124

6-5 Centre Stalls. 5-1 Running Stag, Russian Music, 6-1 Farmost, 8-1 others.

FORM FOCUS Centre Stalls 7½l last of 9 to Air Express in group I stakes at Ascot (1m, good); previously 3¼l 3rd of 11 to Russian Revival in stakes (listed) at Newbury (7f, good to firm). Loch Bering beat Le Sport in 7-runner handicap at Taby (1m 2f, good to soft). Farmost beat Northern Angel ½l in 13-runner handicap here (1m 100yd, AW), previously 2½l 2nd of 13 to Perpetual Light in handicap here (1m 1f 79yd, AW). Russian Music 13l 22nd of 36 to Pasternak in handicap at Newmarket (1m 1f, good to firm) with Prince Of Denial (13lb worse off) 18l 27th. Prince Of Denial 4¾l 12th of 28 to Consort in handicap at Newmarket (1m, good to firm); previously beat Straco ½l in 15-runner handicap at Newbury (1m 1f, good to soft). Puzzlement beat White Plains neck in 12-runner handicap at Lingfield (1m, AW). Running Stag neck 2nd of 6 to Unconditional Love in stakes at Lingfield (1m 2f, AW).

LOCH BERING was unlucky in this last year and is said to have improved

3.55 LONDON HANDICAP (Div I: £2,453: 1m 4f) (10)

1	(6)	5111	SWAN HUNTER 21 (C,D,G,S) D Cosgrove 4-10-0	G Milligan (5)	67
2	(9)	3341	TOI TOI 17 D Arbuthnot 3-9-11	S Whitworth	75
3	(7)	0400	REX MUNDI [illegible] (V,CD,F) P Evans 5-9-6	A McCarthy (7)	74
4	(8)	2210	ORDAINED 28 (D,F) E Alston 4-9-5	Melanie Worden (7)	70
5	(5)	14-0	EL BAILADOR 53 (D,F) J Bethell 6-9-4	G Duffield	59
6	(2)	0004	BELZAO 30 R Simpson 4-8-13	M Gallagher	54
7	(1)	-064	DANKA 8 (V) P Walwyn 3-8-9	D Holland	69
8	(4)	0055	SEFTON BLAKE 21 M Meagher 3-8-7		55
9	(10)	0056	GROVEFAIR LAD 19 S Bowring 3-8-0	R Ffrench (3)	58
10	(3)	0046	CHARISSE DANCER 149 C Thornton 4-7-12	Dale Gibson	51

11-4 Swan Hunter, 4-1 Toi Toi, 6-1 Rex Mundi, 7-1 Ordained, 9-1 others.

4.25 LONDON HANDICAP (Div II: £2,453: 1m 4f) (9)

1	(7)	0046	PRIVATE AUDIENCE B W Hills 4-10-0	C Lowther (3)	71
2	(9)	1440	CHARNWOOD JACK 7 (F) I Campbell 4-9-11	T G McLaughlin	68
3	(2)	3312	CHEROKEE FLIGHT 8J (C,F) S Mellor 3-9-7	M Wigham	68
4	(5)	0260	AS-IS 178 (D,F) M Johnston 3-9-5	D Holland	67
5	(1)	526/	BONJOUR 316J (F) I Semple 7-9-0	M Tebbutt	–
6	(6)	2154	LE GRAND GOUSIER 12J (B,F) R J Price 3-8-11	D McKeown	60
7	(4)	0084	MERCURY 15 B Baugh 4-8-6	R Perham	58
8	(8)	0100	AFRICAN-PARD 23 (F,S) D H-Jones 5-8-1	T Williams	59
9	(3)	5064	PRIX DE CLERMONT 11 G Lewis 3-8-0	R Ffrench (3)	60

2-1 Cherokee Flight, 5-1 Prix De Clermont, 7-1 Private Audience 8-1 others.

CHEPSTOW

THUNDERER
1.15 Miss Roberto
1.45 Little Martina
2.15 Indian Tracker
2.50 The Swan
3.20 Ambleside
3.50 Lord Jim

GOING: SOFT (GOOD TO SOFT IN PLACES) SIS

1.15 SHANE BRODERICK APPEAL HANDICAP HURDLE
BBC1
(£4,500: 2m 4f 110yd) (8 runners)

1	10/013-	JET RULES 294 (CD,G,S) (Jet Stationery Ltd) Mrs J Pitman 7-11-10	G Hogan (3)	137
2	PU/50-1	SESAME SEED 11 (D,G,S) (R Tooth) N Henderson 9-11-7	R Thornton (3)	138
3	56023-4	ROYAL MOUNTBROWNE 32 (D,G,S) Miss M Rowland 9-11-5	P Midgley (3)	–
4	42F14-0	HOLDIMCLOSE 22 (F,S) (Mrs C Loze) R Frost 7-10-13	J Frost	106
5	030-412	MISS ROBERTO 17 (G,S) (M Lineall & Ptnrs) J O'Shea 4-10-6	Michael Brennan (3)	137
6	35-1224	SECRET SERVICE 35 (G,S) (Hole In The Wall Gang) C Barwell 5-10-5	T J Murphy	144
7	52311-2	LOUGH TULLY 46 (D,S) (R Hancocks) F Jordan 7-10-5	A Thornton	140
8	1120-44	DASHING DOLLAR 9 (S) (Merlyn Racing) C Mann 6-10-3	J Magee (3)	140

BETTING: 9-4 Lough Tully, 7-2 Sesame Seed 4-1 Miss Roberto 6-1 Secret Service 7-1 Jet Rules, 14-1 others.

1996: CADOUGOLD 5-10-13 A P McCoy (4-1) M Pipe 8 ran

FORM FOCUS Jet Rules beaten a distance 3rd of 6 to Carole's Crusader in novice chase at Warwick (3m 2f, good to firm), previously beat Robsand ¾l in 15-runner novice chase at Towcester (3m 1f, good to soft). Sesame Seed beat Drum Battle 1l in 7-runner handicap hurdle at Worcester (2m 4f, soft). Royal Mountbrowne beaten a distance 4th of 6 to Viking Flagship in grade II handicap chase at Exeter (2m 1f 110yd, good to soft). Miss Roberto 10l 2nd of 5 to Saint Ciel in handicap hurdle at Haydock (2m, good). Secret Service 8¼l 4th of 6 to Good Vibes in handicap hurdle at Wetherby (2m, good to firm). Lough Tully 5l 2nd of 9 to Tidal Force in handicap hurdle at Chepstow (2m 4f 110yd, good).

LOUGH TULLY needed the run here last time and is well treated

1.45 JACK BROWN BOOKMAKER HANDICAP CHASE
BBC1
(£7,119: 3m 2f 110yd) (8 runners)

1	/14410-	TURNING TRIX 243 (G,S) (M Davies) D Nicholson 10-11-10	R Thornton (3)	149
2	4111P-2	GIVENTIME 17 (CD,S) (L Kimber) A Turnell 9-11-8	L Harvey	152
3	534400-	KILLESHIN 231 (G,S) (H Manners) H Manners 11-11-7	S Curran	154
4	2223FP-	RIVER MANDATE 343 (G,S) (Duchess of Westminster) T Forster 10-11-6	A Thornton	133
5	141P1-2	ORSWELL LAD 24 (S) (R Wright) P Hobbs 8-11-1	Mr R Widger (7)	141
6	3505-12	DOM SAMOURAI 7 (B,D,S) (R Kilpatrick) M Pipe 6-10-11	C Maude	153
7	16/320-	A N C EXPRESS 294 (C,D,S) (H Porter) J King 9-10-10	J Culloty	117
8	PU21-42	LITTLE MARTINA 16 (D,F,S) (C Newport) D Grissell 9-10-6	S McNeill	154

BETTING: 3-1 Dom Samourai, 7-2 Giventime, 11-2 Turning Trix Orswell Lad, 13-2 Little Martina 10-1 others.

1996: SAMLEE 7-10-4 D Bridgwater (9-1) P Hobbs 7 ran

FORM FOCUS Giventime 11l 2nd of 5 to Super Tactics in handicap chase at Kempton (2m 4f 110yd, good to soft). Killeshin beaten a distance 10th of 17 to Belmont King in grade III handicap chase at Ayr (4m 1f, good); previously 46l 7th of 36 to Lord Gyllene in grade III handicap chase at Aintree (4m 4f, good) with Turning Trix (3lb worse off) beaten a distance 13th and River Mandate (2lb better off) pulled up. Orswell Lad 21l 2nd of 6 to Kamikaze in handicap chase at Worcester (2m 7f 110yd, good). Dom Samourai ½l 2nd of 6 to Him Of Praise in handicap chase at Haydock (3m 4f 110yd, soft). A N C Express 53l 8th of 16 to Giventime (15lb worse off) in handicap chase at Chepstow (3m 2f 110yd, good to soft). Little Martina 1½l 2nd of 4 to God Speed You in handicap chase at Warwick (3m 2f, good to soft).

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COURSE SPECIALISTS

CHEPSTOW: Trainers: D Nicholson, 18 winners from 63 runners, 28.6%; P Hobbs, 22 from 82, 26.8%; M Pipe, 50 from 206, 24.3%; P Nicholls, 17 from 79, 21.5%; J Old, 8 from 40, 20.0%; Mrs J Pitman, 7 from 38, 18.4%. Jockeys: D J Burchell, 5 winners from 27 rides, 18.5%; A Thornton, 5 from 41, 12.2%. Only qualifiers.

WOLVERHAMPTON: Trainers: M Prescott 25 winners from 109 runners, 22.9%; M Johnston, 53 from 233, 22.7%; M Meade, 6 from 31, 19.4%; R Guest, 9 from 50, 18.0%; P Haslam, 33 from 185, 17.8%; D Shaw, 5 from 29, 17.2%. Jockeys: T Quinn, 7 winners from 44 rides, 15.9%; D Holland, 18 from 120, 15.0%; G Duffield, 27 from 181, 14.9%; R Ffrench, 3 from 25, 12.0%; A Clark, 22 from 196, 11.2%.

GUIDE TO OUR IN-LINE RACECARD

101 113143 GOOD TIMES 13 (BF,F,G,S) (Mrs D Robinson) B Hall 12-0 B West (7) 88

Racecard number. Six-figure form (F — fell P — pulled up U — unseated rider. B — brought down. S — slipped up R — refused D — disqualified) Horse's name Days since last outing; F if flat (B — blinkers. V — visor. H — hood. E — Eyeshield C — course winner D — distance winner CD — course and distance winner BF — beaten favourite in latest race). Going on which horse has won (F — firm, good to firm, hard G — good S — soft, good to soft, heavy) Owner in brackets. Trainer Age and weight. Rider plus any allowance. The Times Timekeeper's speed rating.

2.15 CORAL REHEARSAL CHASE
BBC1
(Grade II: limited handicap: £18,534. 3m) (6 runners)

1	/122F-3	SEE MORE BUSINESS 17 (C,D,G,S) (J Keighley) P Nicholls 7-11-12	T J Murphy	187
2	31/P6-1	BANJO 21 (F,G,S) (D Mercer) D Nicholson 7-11-10	R Thornton (3)	188
3	21/133-	AIR SHOT 211 (C,G,S) (Mrs P Prowting) D Nicholson 7-10-13	A Thornton	184
4	P/25P/5	EARTH SUMMIT 17 (B,CD,G,S) (Summit Racing Team) N Twiston-Davies 9-10-12	T Jenks	162
5	21/120-	INDIAN TRACKER 269 (S) (J & J Richards) M Pipe 7-10-11	C Maude	145
6	1R/113/	GREENHILL TARE AWAY 700 (C,D,F,G,S) (Mrs P Payne) P Hobbs 9-10-6	S McNeill	–

BETTING: 2-1 Banjo, 9-4 See More Business, 5-1 Indian Tracker, 11-2 Air Shot, 8-1 Earth Summit, 14-1 Greenhill Tare Away

1996 BELMONT KING 8-10-8 A P McCoy (6-1) P Nicholls 7 ran

FORM FOCUS See More Business 18l 3rd of 10 to Suny Bay in handicap chase at Haydock (3m, good) with Earth Summit (1lb better off) 49l 5th. Banjo beat What A Hand 1½l in 6-runner handicap chase at Cheltenham (3m 3f 110yd, good). Air Shot 1l 3rd of 5 to Philip's Woody in handicap chase at Stratford (2m 5f 110yd, good). Indian Tracker 46l 11th of 14 to Hanakham in grade I chase at Cheltenham (3m 1f, good to firm). Greenhill Tare Away 4l 3rd of 16 to Superior Finish in handicap chase at Sandown (3m 5f 110yd, good to soft)

BANJO is at last fulfilling his promise and can outclass these

2.50 GOOD LUCK NOVICES SELLING HURDLE
(£1,898: 2m 4f 110yd) (11 runners)

1		DRAMA KING 19F (Mrs V Guy) B Llewellyn 5-10-12	Michael Brennan (3)	–
2	0642F-F	LYPHARD'S FABLE 182 (Mrs G McFerran) T George 6-10-12		88
3	50-6	QUESTAN 11 (B) (S Nelson) M Pipe 5-10-12	C Maude	76
4	5503-02	QUIET MOMENTS 10 (Mrs L Murphy) P Murphy 4-10-12	L Aspell (3)	94
5	F-F4353	ROYAL HAND 16 (V) (R Armson) R Armson 7-10-12	Mr R Armson	89
6		TYCOON TED 155F (Mrs M Brisbourne) W M Brisbourne 4-10-12	–	–
7	043504-	FORTUNES ROSE 220 (Mrs A Garrett) J King 5-10-7	T J Murphy	–
8	6-P05P0	INDIAN CROWN 16 (B) (P Buckley) N Thomson 7-10-7	–	51
9	300	REDHANDED 24 (D Brace) D Brace 6-10-7	R Thornton (3)	–
10	4235-53	SONG FOR JESS 14 (S Jones) F Jordan 4-10-7	A Thornton	[illegible]
11	008-06	THE SWAN 91 (T Sanders) R Frost 4-10-7	J Frost	–

BETTING. 9-4 Questan 3-1 The Swan, 11-2 Song For Jess 13-2 Lyphard's Fable 8-1 Drama King, Quiet Moments Royal Hand, Fortunes Rose 20-1 others.

1996: AINSI SOIT IL 5-10-12 D Bridgwater (5-1) G McCourt 10 ran

3.20 FLURRY KNOX NOVICES CHASE
(£3,625. 2m 3f 110yd) (6 runners)

1	213P3-1	RIVER BAY 14 (D,S) (Riverwood Racing) Miss H Knight 6-10-13	R Thornton (3)	128
2	2403-2U	AMBLESIDE 10 (S) (E Yiu) Mrs S Williams 6-10-12	S McNeill	138
3	48P6-	CHARLIE'S FOLLY 286 (D Heath) B De Haan 6-10-12	C Maude	–
4	023/562	LANDED GENTRY 7 (S) (K Bell & Son Ltd) J O'Shea 6-10-12	Michael Brennan (3)	140
5	11P2-43	SPRING DOUBLE 15 (V,D,G,S) (Mrs L Berryman) N Twiston-Davies 6-10-12	T Jenks	100
6	412110-	STORMY PASSAGE 246 (S) (P Luff) P Hobbs 7-10-12	A Thornton	–

BETTING: 11-4 Ambleside 3-1 River Bay 7-2 Stormy Passage, 4-1 Landed Gentry 11-2 Spring Double, 25-1 Charlie's Folly.

1996: OR ROYAL 5-11-10 A P McCoy (5-4 fav) M Pipe 6 ran

3.50 DECEMBER MAIDEN HURDLE (£3,155: 2m 110yd) (14 runners)

1		BEAR HUG 67F (K Jones) M Sheppard 4-11-5	–	–
2	P-	BOLD BUSTER 33F (R & Exors Late E Hitchins) I Balding 4-11-5	R Thornton (3)	–
3	0/2	DESERT POWER 18 (Mrs L Williams) D Burchell 8-11-5	D J Burchell	90
4	40	FITZMAURICE 28 (Axom) C Brooks 5-11-5	S McNeill	70
5	502/PP-	KARICLEIGH MAN 369 (H Catherwood) P Hobbs 7-11-5	Mr R Widger (7)	–
6	4-3F	KING OF THIEVES 8 (J Bell) C Mann 5-11-5	J Magee (3)	–
7		LORD JIM 42F (Mrs S Thomas) J Old 5-11-5	L Harvey	–
8	530000-	MAZIRAH 162F (M Appleby) R Curtis 6-11-5	Mr M Appleby	77
9	5	NIGELLO 18 (J Bugg) R Alner 5-11-5	–	60
10	25-	SIBERIAN HENRY 298 (C Tateson) B Smart 4-11-5	I Lawrence	75
11	055/2	SOL MUSIC 22 (G & P Partnership) J King 5-11-5	T J Murphy	100
12	0P00P/	STORM POINT 558 (R Parish) H Howe 9-11-5	–	–
13	440-44	CRYSTAL JEWEL 22 (Mrs I Palmer) P Hobbs 5-11-0	A Thornton	70
14	2-	SOLAZZI 274 (Mrs S Faulks) L Cottrell 5-11-0	O Burrows (5)	–

BETTING: 4-1 Bold Buster, 9-2 Crystal Jewel, 5-1 Sol Music, 11-2 Solazzi, 7-1 King Of Thieves, Lord Jim, 8-1 Siberian Henry. 14-1 others.

1996: TOMPETOO 5-11-5 C Maude (5-2) N Twiston-Davies 9 ran

SANDOWN PARK

THUNDERER
12.50 Symbol Of Success
1.25 Ivor's Flutter
1.55 Direct Route
2.30 Ask Tom
3.05 Carlito Brigante
3.40 FINAL STAB (nap)

Timekeeper's top rating: 2.30 VIKING FLAGSHIP.

GOING: GOOD TO SOFT (GOOD IN PLACES) TOTE JACKPOT MEETING SIS

12.50 EWELL CHASE
(£6,840. 3m 110yd) (6 runners)

101	2166-F5	FOODBROKER STAR 9 (D,S) (Food Brokers Ltd) J Gifford 7-11-10	P Hide	129
102	P33F-FU	AARDWOLF 14 (BF,CD,G,S) (Lady Camilla Dempster) C Brooks 6-11-7	G Bradley	[illegible]
103	22PF0-P	BUCKHOUSE BOY 28 (G,S) (Bawtry Boys) D Nicholson 7-11-7	A Maguire	151
104	2201-1U	FRAZER ISLAND 14 (D,F,G,S) (Dr B Alexander) R Rowe 8-11-5	D Bridgwater	148
105	/3-11F1	SYMBOL OF SUCCESS 15 (D,F,G) (N O T Racing Synd) D Williams 6-10-10	Mr S Durack	135
106	4U4323-	THERMAL WARRIOR 199 (S) (Kentish Men) J Old 9-10-10	C Llewellyn	118

BETTING: 5-2 Aardwolf, 11-4 Buckhouse Boy, 7-2 Frazer Island, 6-1 Foodbroker Star, 7-1 Symbol Of Success, 10-1 Thermal Warrior

1996: AARDWOLF 5-10-13 G Bradley (7-2) C Brooks 4 ran

1.25 DOUG BARROTT HANDICAP HURDLE
(£4,970. 2m 6f) (12 runners)

201	/11112F	COUCHANT 14 (BF,D,F,G) (Teltone Racing) M Pipe 6-12-0	A P McCoy	134
202	2222111	NAME OF OUR FATHER 10 (D,F,G,S) (T Morris) P Bowen 4-11-7	A Maguire	140
203	3411F-1	FRIENDSHIP 17 (CD,G,S) (T Benfield) N Henderson 5-11-5	M A Fitzgerald	136
204	1FF12-2	GROOVING 17 (F,G,S) (Mrs T Brown) J Gifford 8-11-5	P Hide	138
205	033-253	INFLUENCE PEDLER 14 (G) (Miss S Blumberg) J Old 4-11-3	C Llewellyn	139
206	520/2/1	IVOR'S FLUTTER 10 (D,G) (W Perry) D Elsworth 8-11-0	G Bradley	132
207	121023	SHERIFF 28 (F,G,S) (T Milsom) J Hills 6-10-13	R Dunwoody	[illegible]
208	010/UB/	CHARMER'S WELL 700 (G,S) (Baldings Ltd) G Balding 9-10-8	Mr E Babington (7)	–
209	5331-F4	ROYAL PIPER 17 (D,F,S) (A Darlington) A J Wilson 10-10-7	W McFarland	141
210	51233-P	ANNA SOLEIL 84 (F) (M St Quinton) O Sherwood 4-10-5	M Richards	130
211	10/30/4	ROBINGO 10 (V,S) (J Neville) J Neville 8-10-1	R Johnson	134
212	305-346	BEND SABLE 10 (F,G,S) (Test Valley Partnership) [illegible] 7-10-0	D Gallagher	137

Long handicap: Bend Sable 9-11

BETTING: 9-2 Name Of Our Father, 5-1 Friendship, 6-1 Couchant, Grooving, 7-1 Ivor's Flutter, 10-1 Influence Pedler Sheriff Robingo, 12-1 others.

1996: COKENNY BOY 11-10-6 N Williamson (20-1) Mrs J Pitman 5 ran

1.55 HENRY VIII NOVICES CHASE
C4
(Grade II: £12,560: 2m) (7 runners)

301	200-121	CHIEF'S SONG 14 (D,F,G,S) (Mrs A Dennis) S Dow 7-11-7	D Bridgwater	134
302	11030-1	CRACK ON 63 (D,F,G,S) (D Pepplatt) P Hobbs 7-11-7	R Dunwoody	120
303	/1013-1	HOH WARRIOR 42 (D,G,S) (D Allport) C Brooks 6-11-4	G Bradley	[illegible]
304	2210-11	QUEEN OF SPADES 20 (D,G,S) (Mrs R Vaughan) N Twiston-Davies 7-11-2	C Llewellyn	136
305	13P2-12	DIRECT ROUTE 20 (D,F,G,S) (M Thompson) J Howard Johnson 6-11-0	A P McCoy	140
306	8/112F-	HURRICANE LAMP 273 (D,G,S) (Mr & Mrs F Welch) D Nicholson 6-11-0	A Maguire	–
307	43-04U1	SPACE TRUCKER 7 (D,F,G,S) Mrs J Harrington (Ire) 6-11-0	M A Fitzgerald	119

BETTING: 5-2 Space Trucker, 3-1 Direct Route, 7-2 Queen Of Spades, 11-2 Chief's Song, 13-2 Hoh Warrior, 7-1 Crack On, 10-1 Hurricane Lamp.

1996: MULLIGAN 6-11-0 A Maguire (4-6 fav) D Nicholson 3 ran

FORM FOCUS Chief's Song beat Ground Nut 1½l in 5-runner novice chase at Ascot (2m, good to soft). Crack On beat Bayerd 4l in 3-runner novice chase at Chepstow (2m 3f 110yd, good to firm). Hoh Warrior beat Cheryl's Lad 10l in 6-runner novice chase at Market Rasen (2m 1f 110yd, good). Queen Of Spades beat Direct Route (7lb better off) neck in 5-runner grade II novice chase at Cheltenham (2m, good) with Space Trucker (7lb better off) unseated rider. Hurricane Lamp fell in novice hurdle at Sandown (2m 110yd, good), previously 5l 2nd of 5 to Le Teteu in grade II novice hurdle at Doncaster (2m 110yd, good). Space Trucker beat The Secret Grey 8l in 5-runner novice chase at Haydock (2m, soft).

HOH WARRIOR recorded a decent time at Market Rasen and could be a bit of value

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS	Wins	Rnrs	%	JOCKEYS	Winners	Rides	%
P Bowen	3	8	37.5	R Dunwoody	29	102	28.4
D Nicholson	28	88	31.8	A Maguire	21	92	22.8
J Old	11	41	26.8	R Johnson	4	19	21.1
O Sherwood	9	46	19.6	A P McCoy	11	59	18.6
S Dow	5	26	19.2	D Bridgwater	6	36	16.7
P Hobbs	6	36	16.7	C Llewellyn	5	42	11.9

2.30 MITSUBISHI SHOGUN TINGLE CREEK TROPHY CHASE
C4
(Grade I: £33,110: 2m) (7 runners)

401	12124-P	ASK TOM 32 (BF,D,F,G,S) (B Stewart-Brown) T Tate 8-11-7	R Garritty	186
402	3F2-154	CELIBATE 18 (D,F,G,S) (Stamford Bridge Ptnrs) C Mann 6-11-7	M A Fitzgerald	178
403	F2141-1	KLAIRON DAVIS 44 (D,G,S) (C Jones) A L Moore (Ire) 8-11-7	R Dunwoody	184
404	111FF-2	MULLIGAN 32 (CD,F,G,S) (Lady Harris) D Nicholson 7-11-7	A Maguire	183
405	3d2-3FR	OH SO RISKY 7 (D,F,G) (M Tabor) D Elsworth 10-11-7	P Holley	149
406	11213-3	OR ROYAL 14 (B,BF,D,F,G,S) (D Johnson) M Pipe 6-11-7	A P McCoy	174
407	1333-12	VIKING FLAGSHIP 11 (CD,F,G,S) (Roach Foods) D Nicholson 10-11-7	R Johnson	[illegible]

BETTING: 13-8 Klairon Davis, 7-2 Mulligan, 4-1 Or Royal, Viking Flagship, 6-1 Ask Tom, 33-1 others.

1996: SOUND MAN 8-11-7 R Dunwoody (10-11 fav) E O'Grady (Ire) 4 ran

FORM FOCUS Klairon Davis beat Fiftysevenchannels 11l in 3-runner chase at Fairyhouse (2m, good). Or Royal 5½l 3rd of 11 to Simply Dashing in grade II handicap chase at Ascot (2m 3f 110yd, good to soft). Viking Flagship 9l 2nd of 6 to One Man in grade II chase at Huntingdon (2m 4f 110yd, good); previously beat Mulligan (18lb worse off) 5l in 6-runner grade II handicap chase at Exeter (2m 1f 110yd, good to soft) with Ask Tom (levels) pulled up and Oh So Risky (17lb worse off) fell.

The imperious VIKING FLAGSHIP can put some young pretenders to the sword

3.05 WILLIAM HILL HANDICAP HURDLE
C4
(£34,458: 2m 110yd) (21 runners)

501	13011-3	POTENTATE 28 (D,F,G,S) (J Weeden) M Pipe 6-11-13	A P McCoy	150
502	01021-1	GRIMES 40 (D,G,S) (J McManus) C Roche (Ire) 4-11-13	C O'Dwyer	154
503	/14350-	SILVER GROOM 77F (CD,F,S) (Silver Darling Ptnrs) M Channon 7-11-7	D Byrne	149
504	1200-23	KERAWI 20 (D,G,S) (M Archer, Miss J Broadhurst) N Twiston-Davies 4-11-4	C Llewellyn	[illegible]
505	1224-11	POTTER'S GALE 19 (D,G,S) (J Poper) D Nicholson 6-11-2	A Maguire	151
506	11-	BELLATOR 378 (D,G) ([illegible]) G Balding 4-11-0	B Fenton	140
507	20111-1	STORMYFAIRWEATHER 8 (D,F,S) N Henderson 5-10-12	M A Fitzgerald	155
508	1212F-U	CHAI-YO 20 (D,G,S) (N Viney) J Old 7-10-12	G Bradley	150
509	1512P-2	PRINCEFUL 15 (D,G,S) (R & Exors E Hitchins) Mrs J Pitman 6-10-10	R Dunwoody	152
510	14112-0	CARLITO BRIGANTE 20 (CD,F,G,S) (R Perkins) P R Webber 5-10-8	R Garritty	154
511	1110-31	ELA AGAPI MOU 15 (D,F,G,S) (Action II) G L Moore 4-10-7	D Gallagher	157
512	135-040	GREENBACK 14 (CD,F,G,S) (J Joseph) P Hobbs 6-10-7	M Richards	158
513	-453304	NON VINTAGE 7 (D,G,S) (A Mann) M Chapman 6-10-5	W Worthington	157
514	2P12-21	GLOBE RUNNER 20 (D,G,S) (G & P Barker Ltd) J J O'Neill 4-10-5	D Bridgwater	153
515	0/11-11	NAHRAWALI 35 (D,F,G) (C Sparrowhawk) G L Moore 6-10-4	M Batchelor (7)	155
516	2324-22	NEW INN 11 (D,F) (I Stewart) S Gollings 6-10-4	Mr S Durack (5)	155
517	11-2	ALABANG 35 (BF,D,G) (Elite Racing Club) M Camacho 6-10-2	R Johnson	148
518	1504-52	FORESTAL 28 (BF,D,G,S) (B Maguire) J Howard Johnson 5-10-1	G McCormack (5)	155
519	30-11P5	DANEGOLD 15 (V,D,F,G) (Circular Distributors Ltd) M Channon 5-10-1	P Holley	153
520	61-0545	MAJOR JAMIE 34 (D,G,S) (C Nolan) A L Moore (Ire) 6-10-0	Mr R Walsh	145
521	111510	PUNKAH 14 (D,F,G,S) (McCourt Fine Meats Ltd) G McCourt 4-10-0	D J Moffatt	154

Long handicap: Punkah 9-12

BETTING. 5-1 Stormyfairweather, 11-2 Grimes, 8-1 Alabang, 10-1 Chai-Yo Potter's Gale, Princeful 11-1 Potentate, 12-1 Ela Agapi Mou, 14-1 Carlito Brigante, 16-1 Bellator, Kerawi, Nahrawali, 20-1 others.

1996: MAKE A STAND 5-10-8 G Tormey (9-1) M Pipe 15 ran

FORM FOCUS Potentate 1¾l 3rd of 9 to Marello in handicap hurdle at Chepstow (2m 4f 110yd, good to soft) with Danegold (13lb better off) pulled up. Grimes beat Commanche Court 1l in 10-runner listed handicap hurdle at Leopardstown (3m, good to soft). Silver Groom 13l 8th of 18 to Carlito Brigante (13lb worse off) in handicap hurdle at Sandown (2m 110yd, good) with Danegold (6lb worse off) 44l 15th and Chai-Yo (3lb worse off) fell. Kerawi 5¼l 3rd of 17 to Mr Percy in handicap hurdle at Cheltenham (2m 110yd, good) with Non Vintage (2lb better off) 21l 9th, Carlito Brigante (2lb better off) 22l 10th and Chai-Yo (2lb better off) unseated rider. Potter's Gale beat New Inn (11lb better off) 7l in 5-runner handicap hurdle at Leicester (2m, good to soft). Bellator beat Noble Lord 15l in 4-runner juvenile novice hurdle at Aintree (2m 110yd, good). Stormyfairweather beat Riparius 6l in 7-runner handicap hurdle at Newbury (2m 110yd, soft). Ela Agapi Mou beat Princeful (2lb better off) 1½l in 5-runner handicap hurdle at Ascot (2m 110yd, soft) with Danegold (9lb better off) 34l last. Globe Runner beat Linlathen 4l in 10-runner handicap hurdle at Ayr (2m 4f, good to soft). Nahrawali beat Palamon 4l in 6-runner handicap hurdle at Ascot (2m 110yd, good). Alabang 2l 2nd of 6 to Good Vibes in handicap hurdle at Wetherby (2m, good to firm) with Forestal (5lb better off) 23l 5th.

ALABANG goes well with some cut and his second to Good Vibes is working out

3.40 MERCURY FM NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE
C4
(£4,280: 2m 110yd) (7 runners)

601	114	SOFYAAN 25 (D,F,G) (E Reitel) Lady Herries 4-11-10	R Dunwoody	110
602	P0-1	BALLADUR 44 (D,G) (Peters & Lee) Mrs J Pitman 4-11-2	A P McCoy	114
603	01	FINAL STAB 12 (D,G) (Mrs S Dwyer) C Dwyer 4-10-10	C Llewellyn	118
604	1352	DIEGO 9 (D,G) (P Douglas Engineering) M Pitman 4-10-9	R Johnson	[illegible]
605	-522323-	NEAT FEAT 250 (BF,D,F) (Food Brokers Ltd) D Elsworth 6-10-9	P Holley	112
606	4-33	MILFORD SOUND 18 (Mrs K Vann) P Hobbs 4-10-8	M A Fitzgerald	109
607	223-2U4	RYTHM ROCK 19 (B) (P Radcliffe) D Gandolfo 8-10-0	A Maguire	118

BETTING: 6-4 Sofyaan, 5-2 Balladur, 6-1 Neat Feat, 7-1 Diego, 12-1 Milford Sound, Rythm Rock, 16-1 Final Stab.

1996: AERION 5-11-11 J Osborne (7-4 fav) O Sherwood 8 ran

FORM FOCUS Sofyaan beaten a distance last of 4 to Sanmartino in hurdle at Newbury (2m 110yd, good); previously beat Miss Ondee 24l in 5-runner hurdle at Chepstow (2m 110yd, good). Balladur beat Lonicera ½l in 10-runner novice hurdle at Wincanton (2m, good). Final Stab beat Among Islands 8l in 16-runner selling hurdle at Ludlow (2m, good). Diego 6l 2nd of 8 to Saint Ciel in handicap hurdle at Uttoxeter (2m, good). Neat Feat 3¼l 3rd of 9 to Mrs Em in novice hurdle at Wincanton (2m, firm).

FINAL STAB was most impressive at Ludlow and looks to be improving

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Striker rises to head for new goals

Mick Quinn, former footballer, has found new ways to spend his time and money as a trainer

SIMON BARNES

Talking horse

Courage comes in all kinds of forms. So does love. So does folly. A first-season trainer knows that better than most. A first-season trainer with his first runner just days away: standing at the top of the Cresta Run with terror — no, not terror, really not terror, just the knowledge that the road is steep, slippery and marked with the disasters of a thousand thousand who have gone before.

It helps, then, if he knows a few things about horses. About racing. About business management and finance. And many, if not most trainers learn such things from birth, take it in with mother's milk and father's mood. Racing is a sport about the study of nature and nurture: and their inextricability. That is true for horses, true for humans.

It takes a brave person to go in from the outside: and an exceptional one to succeed. By success, I don't mean winning the Derby and the Gold Cup. I mean avoiding bankruptcy. Away, then, to the bottom of a steepish rise in a field that lies a stiffish hack away from Lambourn. To stand with the latest supplicant at sport's least forgiving altar. An ex-footballer by the name of Mick Quinn.

Quinn, aka the Flying Pig, aka Super Sumo. A big, unsvelte man who scored goals: stacks of them. For Portsmouth, Newcastle United, Coventry City among many. A notch above journeyman; a notch below top-class. And he was a player with a reputation. Reputation is a bad word in football.

Likes a drink. Likes a gamble. This being synecdoche: in truth, Quinn liked several drinks and always liked to follow racing wallet-first. That is true of many people who live blameless and effective professional lives. But in football, it is enough to make you — well, not a marked man. One that people are wary of.

People were wary of Quinn. Sharp-minded and unable to resist a quip, a relish for living. He has never cared to disappoint people who sought the traditional Wacky Scouser. (Who was it that said he would give a good deal to meet a non-wacky Scouser?)

And the horse spun in horror at a paper bag and tried to run home, and the lad (female and employed to do the secretarial work in this fledgeling set-up) turned him back the right way, and Quinn muttered almost to himself: "Got the moral fibre of a peanut." You may insert your own four-letter words into Quinn's remarks: it will save me a great deal of work. Don't stint yourself. No harm is meant by it, any more than I mean harm with commas and full stops.

Many footballers are attracted to racing. At the races, you can be flashy, boozy, noticed and admired. Many footballers love a gamble. The romantic loucheness, if I can be permitted such a word, of racing is tailor-made for the archetypal, footballing, Flash Harry.

How can you make a trainer from such a person? Answer: you can't. But gambling and boozing are not so much the exposed part of the iceberg in Quinn's nature, as the layer of paint on the top of the Eiffel Tower.

Quite early in his footballing career, Quinn got involved with ownership. Naturally, he sent the horses to his friend, Mick Channon, the England footballer turned successful trainer. He was welcomed as a regular visitor to the yard. And it was here that Quinn was struck by the thunderbolt of love.

He discovered that it was not gambling he loved, but horses. Not racing, but racehorses. Soon, Quinn was involved in handling his own horses, leading them, grooming them, *learning* them. And Channon, seeing this love, seeing this helpless desire to enter the charmed circle of horsiness, seeing, perhaps, himself, broke the circle and allowed Quinn to enter.

Many people go through some kind of crisis in their early thirties. No footballer can avoid it. What to do when the music stops? Quinn wanted to follow his heart into racing. But hearts only get you so far, as the bankruptcy court will tell you. Quinn thought it a good idea to get his mind onside as well.

A footballer who "likes a drink" is always typecast as wastrel. The truth is that Quinn has always had a taste for hard work. And also, there was about his football career the unmistakable taste of disappointment. Some who achieve great success in sport find their appetite — for work, for success — jaded when they essay a second career. Quinn has only tasted success: he has never had the chance to gourmandise.

Hungry for work, hungry for achievement. He left football and worked as an unpaid pupil assistant to Channon — Channon, whose role in this story is of a large-hearted and generous man. "Slight change from one training session a day and then go home. Slight change from the wages, too."

A footballer is not used to mucking out, but he gets a lot of practice at mucking in. It was no problem to him, being one of the lads. He also did three Jockey Club courses in training, two of which did not touch on horses at all. Finance, business administration: it is all very well being good at your job, but unless you are good at money, you are sunk.

Quinn lived off his savings. Invested in a training establishment. Bought horses. Sought owners. Applied for a licence to train. Got it at the second attempt. And is now training 14 horses, spaces for more. Flat racing in winter on the all-weather tracks is not the best treat that racing has to offer. At Southwell on Monday, it is the most important day of Quinn's life.

Fairy Domino and Katie's Cracker. Names with which to conjure. And Quinn becomes the third professional footballer to train racehorses, the other being Francis Lee. He is inclined to stress rather than hide his footballing origins. His horses will parade in a blanket that bears a football logo. Quinn himself prefers the footballer's shell suit to cords and Barbour, a baseball cap to a flat cap from the shop in Jermyn Street in which a stuffed cat smokes a cigar.

He learnt to ride but doesn't, much, feeling you can see more from the ground. He was a child of the inner city, and horses were a passion that came late in life. In childhood, like measles, the horsey passion is easily shaken off. If acquired in later life, both are deadly serious.

A feeling for horses. More, the ability to trust in your feeeling for horses. "She was just a bit special. I just liked the way she walked." On such feelings, Quinn has unbelted a fair amount of the readies: and staked his future, his credibility as a person.

It is hard and brave to do, this, even if you have been bred for the task and brought up in the smell of it. To do so from the world of football, a world not only unhorsey but in many ways quite unreal, is an act of rare courage. And love and folly, of course, as I say, but nobody goes into horses (or stays in horses) without lashings of those two things. It is the courage that is exceptional. Sumo Quinn sprinkles salt onto the arena of combat, adjusts his loin cloth and crouches on his mark. Let battle commence.

The mighty Quinn shows off two horses at his yard near Lambourn. Miss Dangerous, left, and Katie's Cracker. Photograph: Hugh Routledge

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Sandown Park

Going: good to soft (good in places)

1.00 (2m 110yd hdle) 1, Country Beau (R Dunwoody, 3-1 fav; Richard Evans's nap); 2, Skycab (16-1); 3, Bracey Run (25-1). 21 ran. 8l, 3l. J King. Tote: £3.30; £1.50, £2.60, £9.00. DF: £21.20. Trio: £222.40. CSF: £47.16

1.30 (2m 4f 110yd ch) 1, Wise King (C Llewellyn, 3-1); 2, Bengers Moor (9-1); 3, Amlah (5-1). Dantes Cavalier 9-4 fav. 5 ran. NR: Smuggler's Point. Nk, 1¾l. J Old. Tote: £3.50; £1.90, £2.70. DF: £7.00. CSF: £11.22.

2.05 (2m 6f hdle) 1, Song Of The Sword (G Bradley, 11-4); 2, Prospero (9-1); 3, Fujiyama Crest (13-2). Noisy Miner 7-4 fav. 9 ran. 5l, 3½l. J Old. Tote: £3.90; £1.40, £2.60, £1.90. DF: £14.80. Trio: £18.70. CSF: £26.47.

2.35 (2m 4f 110yd ch) 1, Oatis Regrets (A Maguire, 12-1); 2, Linton Rocks (6-1); 3, Philip's Woody (4-1). Redeemyourself 9-4 fav. 8 ran. 2½l, 1¼l. Miss H Knight. Tote: £14.10; £2.70, £1.80, £1.60. DF: £80.40. CSF: £75.55. Tricast: £314.06.

3.10 (3m 5f 110yd ch) 1, Samlee (D Bridgwater, 2-1); 2, What A Hand (13-8 fav). Only two finished. 4 ran. NR: Little Martina. 1l. P Hobbs. Tote: £2.80. DF: £2.80. CSF: £5.29.

3.40 (2m 110yd hdle) 1, Tough Act (M A Fitzgerald, 8-1); 2, Majesty (14-1); 3, Running De Cerisy (9-4 fav). 12 ran. 5l, 10l. Mrs A Perrett. Tote: £8.30; £2.00, £2.70, £1.90. DF: £54.60. Trio: £94.50. CSF: £99.42.

Jackpot: not won (pool of £5,841.74 carried forward to Sandown Park today).

Placepot: £166.60. Quadpot: £18.60.

Exeter

Going: soft

12.50 (2m 2f hdle) 1, It's Wallace (L Aspell, 4-1); 2, Swan Street (9-1); 3, Province (4-1). Lord Nitrogen 3-1 fav. 9 ran. 4l, 1l. J Poulton. Tote: £4.40; £1.90, £1.70, £1.40. DF: £18.50. Trio: £24.00. CSF: £38.58. Tricast: £140.77.

1.20 (2m 2f ch) 1, Silent Guns (D Salter, 6-1); 2, Glen Mirage (9-1); 3, Colette's Choice (11-1). Shimba Hills 7-2 fav. 10 ran. 9l, 1l. G Edwards. Tote: £6.20; £3.00, £3.60, £2.30. DF: £62.40. CSF: £53.88. Tricast: £532.75. Trio: £214.20.

1.50 (2m 2f ch) 1, Boardroom Shuffle (L Aspell, 1-7 fav). 2, Pennymoor Prince (20-1); 3, Artistic Plan (25-1). 4 ran. 12l, dist. J Gifford. Tote: £1.10. DF: £4.60. CSF: £3.53.

2.25 (2m 7f 110yd ch) 1, Mailwood Castle (A Thornton, 5-1); 2, Special Account (9-1); 3, Clifton Set (11-4 fav). 7 ran. 10l, 3½l. R Alner. Tote: £4.10; £3.30, £4.60. DF: £15.80. CSF: £38.07

2.55 (2m 2f hdle) 1, Supreme Charm (Mr R Wakley, 3-1); 2, Winston Run (3-1); 3, Not For Parrot (14-1). Iranos evens fav. 10 ran. NR: Benefit-In-Kind. Nk, dist. K Bailey. Tote: £3.00; £1.10, £1.30, £1.80. DF: £5.40. Trio: £10.20. CSF: £11.58.

3.30 (2m 2f hdle) 1, Sadler's Realm (G Tormey, 2-1 fav; Timekeeper's top rating); 2, Walter's Destiny (6-1); 3, Musical Monarch (15-2). 7 ran. 8l, 6l. P Hobbs. Tote: £3.00; £1.30, £2.20. DF: £10.70. CSF: £14.46.

Placepot: £110.70. Quadpot: £14.00.

Hereford

Going: good, good to soft in places

12.40 (2m 1f hdle) 1, Supermick (C Maude, 4-7 fav). 2, Solsgie Cove (8-1); 3, Indian Nectar (9-1). 8 ran. NR: Meadow Dancer. 8l, 1¼l. M Pipe. Tote: £1.70; £1.20, £1.40, £2.20. DF: £3.80. Trio: £11.60. CSF: £6.59.

1.10 (2m 3f ch) 1, Jason's Boy (R Johnson, 5-2). 2, Sense Of Value (20-1); 3, Seahawk Retriever (11-8 fav). 5 ran. 5l, 13l. J Bradley. Tote: £2.60; £1.50, £2.40. DF: £41.30. CSF: £29.71

1.40 (2m 1f hdle) 1, Gutteridge (Mr A Evans, 9-4 fav); 2, Distant Storm (5-1); 3, Beryllium (5-2). 14 ran. 3½l, 4l. P Evans. Tote: £3.00; £1.40, £2.30, £2.40. DF: £8.40. Trio: £2.40. CSF: £13.75. Tricast: £30.71.

2.15 (2m 3f ch) 1, Ground Nut (B Powell, 4-5 fav). 2, Lord McMurrough (4-1); 3, Stage Fright (20-1). 8 ran. 12l, 5l. R Buckler. Tote: £1.90; £1.10, £2.10, £3.00. DF: £5.00. CSF: £4.53

2.45 (2m 3f 110yd hdle) 1, Laredo (Mr S Durack, 9-2); 2, Cul De Sac (3-1); 3, Brambleshill Duke (evens fav). 15 ran. NR: Tonka. 4l, 26l. N Chance. Tote: £5.60; £1.30, £1.10, £1.10. DF: £7.90. Trio: £2.20. CSF: £16.76

3.20 (3m 1f 110yd ch) 1, Market Gossip (Mr J Tizzard, 6-1); 2, Toskano (7-2); 3, Lauren's Treasure (10-1). Indian Delight 9-4 fav. 10 ran. 3l, dist. R Alner. Tote: £6.70; £1.30, £1.80, £3.50. DF: £11.10. Trio: £57.20. CSF: £24.78. Tricast: £190.44

3.50 (2m 1f flat) 1, Kadou Nonantais (J A McCarthy, 4-1); 2, Tim French (13-2); 3, Danny Bell (5-2 fav). 16 ran. NR: Pollys Sister. 11l, 7l. O Sherwood. Tote: £3.00; £1.20, £2.60, £1.50. DF: £19.50. Trio: £10.30. CSF: £30.51.

Placepot: £14.20. Quadpot: £2.80.

Samlee displays gallantry beyond call of duty

By Chris McGrath

AS IF in rebellion against the torpor of its suburban environment, the stiff fences and unforgiving hill at Sandown Park yesterday more resembled landmarks on a battlefield. Even with just four runners, for instance, the thundering upheaval of the Bovis Europe Handicap Chase required unflinching courage from man and horse alike.

For Buck Jakes, the American grey imported with fanciful ambitions of winning the Martell Grand National, there was the dismay of a soldier who finds his resources inadequate in the line of fire. He was pulled up in the back straight.

For Inchcailloch, beginning to crack as the three remaining runners approached the second last, there was a direct hit — a horrid fall onto his neck, from which he and Richard Dunwoody did well to emerge even in the gingerly fashion they did. And for What A Hand and Timmy Murphy, the desolation of a siege that is finally forced to yield, even with relief in sight. They had seized the initiative approaching the last, but could not endure the final push up the Sandown hill.

It was left to Samlee, who got up on the post for an improbable length success, to turn such inconsequential drama into a lesson for less frivolous arenas: never despair. At one stage, David Bridgwater had even considered pulling him up. Thirteen days earlier, Philip Hobbs had saddled Samlee to win over the big fences at Aintree. Yesterday, as he tailed off in the back straight, it looked very much as though his experience of National service had converted him into a conscientious objector.

Sarah Hobbs, the trainer's wife, said: "David could only school round for a circuit, the horse was so spooked and worried by the fences, and he thought about pulling him up. It's strange, they can react that way after jumping brilliantly round Aintree. It was only when the other two took a pull at the final turn that he could get back into the race."

Samlee, having confirmed his gallantry, will next go into action in the Welsh marches. The sponsors leave him unchanged on 12-1 for the Coral Welsh National, for which a penalty takes his weight up to 10st 5lb, but the Tote cut him to 10-1, the same price as What A Hand.

The latter's last-gasp defeat completed a miserable 24 hours for Murphy, who had received a 30-day suspension from the Jockey Club on Thursday for persistent whip offences. It was ironic, then, that some felt the poor fellow to have waited too long before trying to galvanise Bengers Moor in the P & O Developments Novice Chase. This time, the hill was not enough to thwart Wise King's decisive dash for home.

His trainer, Jim Old, vacated the winner's enclosure only briefly when saddling Song Of The Sword for the next, the Bovis Crowngap Winter Novices' Hurdle. Graham Bradley gave Lady Lloyd-Webber's gelding a brilliant ride in front here, demoralising his pursuers one by one. Though his own mount also tired, walking through the last two, Bradley had preserved enough to hold on by five lengths from Prospero. Old said: "He is improving, because his attitude is getting better. He used to be wired to the moon."

Another superbly aggressive ride — this time from Adrian Maguire — secured the Bovis Lelliott Handicap Chase for Oatis Regrets. As at the wedding feast at Cana, however, the best wine had been served first. Country Beau, who won the December NH Novices' Hurdle by eight fluent lengths, is inspiring the grandest hopes in Jeff King, who usually restricts regal airs to his surname.

"He never jumped at Newbury on his reappearance, but had the best bumper form in the country," the trainer said. "Long before he ever raced last winter, I knew he was the best I'd sat on in a long time." Certainly, there are more medals to be won with him.

☐ Leighton Aspell completed a double at Exeter yesterday on It's Wallace and the potentially high-class Boardroom Shuffle, but later broke his left collarbone in a fall from Brave Highlander in the ALC Windows Handicap Chase.

WETHERBY

THUNDERER

12.40 No Gimmicks. 1.10 Edelweis Du Moulin. 1.40 Nigel's Lad. 2.10 Strath Royal. 2.40 Macgeorge. 3.15 Second Fiddle.

GOING: GOOD TO SOFT SIS

12.40 STEVE HUMBLES BIRTHDAY NOVICES HURDLE (£2,903: 2m 7f) (9 runners)

1 0-21 ARCTIC FOX 26 (G) Mrs M Reveley 5-11-6 ... P Niven
2 32-1 ARDRONAN 20 (G,S) J J O'Neill 7-11-6 ... R McGrath (3)
3 33-1 NO GIMMICKS 14 (S) J FitzGerald 5-11-6 ... P Carberry
4 1 PALADUS 77 (F) G M Moore 5-11-6 ... N Bentley
5 60-0 CLERICAL COUSIN 9 L Lungo 8-11-0 ... R Supple
6 000/ MR FRANGIPANI 622 G Richards 6-11-0 ... R Burns (7)
7 456/ ORGAN RECITAL 926 O Brennan 8-11-0 ... M Brennan
8 52-3 REVOLT 18 (BF) T Easterby 5-11-0 ... L Wyer
9 FF6- PHARTOOMANNY 244P (S) B Mactaggart 7-10-9 ... B Storey

2-1 No Gimmicks, 3-1 Ardronan, 7-2 Revolt, 6-1 Arctic Fox, Paladus, 16-1 Mr Frangipani, 25-1 Clerical Cousin, Organ Recital, 50-1 Phartoomanny.

1.10 DICK WARDEN NOVICES CHASE (£3,756: 2m 4f 110yd) (7)

1 -1-11 EDELWEIS DU MOULIN 15 (D,F,G,S) G Richards 5-11-10 P Carberry
2 -251 DAWN MISSION 16 (B,F,G) T Easterby 5-11-5 ... L Wyer
3 022/ FEELS LIKE GOLD 574 (S) G Richards 9-11-0 ... P Niven
4 420- MAITRE DE MUSIQUE 243 (S) M Todhunter 6-11-0 ... R Guest
5 61-U PUREVALUE 23 (D,F,G,S) M W Easterby 6-11-0 ... B Storey
6 F-5B ROCKETTS CASTLE 28 Mrs S Bramall (Ire) 7-11-0 Mr J Cullen (7)
7 6- RYSANSHYN 401 R Johnson 5-10-9 ... K Johnson

5-6 Edelweis Du Moulin, 4-1 Purevalue, 5-1 Dawn Mission, 7-1 Feels Like Gold, 12-1 Maitre De Musique, 16-1 Rocketts Castle, 66-1 Rysanshyn.

1.40 ATS HANDICAP HURDLE (£3,574: 2m) (9)

1 240- INGLETONIAN 217 (D,S) B Mactaggart 8-12-0 ... B Storey
2 151- NIGEL'S LAD 49F (D,G) P Haslam 5-11-7 ... M Foster
3 0P-F MARCHANT MING 20 (D,G,S) M Hammond 5-11-4 N Horrocks (7)
4 23-4 DANA POINT 48 (D,G) Mrs S Smith 5-10-13 ... R Guest
5 10-3 NO MORE HASSLE 17 (BF,D,G,S) Mrs M Reveley 4-10-13 P Niven
6 -FU5 DURANO 7 (CD,S) T Easterby 6-10-12 ... L Wyer
7 2-31 OUT ON A PROMISE 9 (D,F,S) L Lungo 5-10-11 ... R Supple
8 1-24 DR BONES 36 (BF,D,G,S) F Murphy 4-10-11 Mr O McPhail (7)
9 3211 SAINT CIEL 9 (D,G,S) F Jordan 9-10-9 ... P Carberry

4-1 Nigel's Lad, 9-2 Saint Ciel, 5-1 Dana Point, No More Hassle, 13-2 Dr Bones, 8-1 Marchant Ming, Durano, Out On A Promise, 14-1 Ingletonian.

2.10 WHARFE HANDICAP CHASE (£6,730: 3m 1f) (4)

1 -211 STRATH ROYAL 9 (CD,F,G,S) O Brennan 11-11-10 M Brennan
2 111- COLONEL IN CHIEF 213 (CD,G,S) G Richards 7-11-5 P Carberry
3 05-2 WUDIMP 16 (D,F,G,S) Mrs J Storey 8-10-0 ... Mr C Storey
4 0/0- PENNYPOT 405 Mrs S Bramall (Ire) 6-10-0 ... Mr J Cullen (7)

11-10 Colonel In Chief, 11-8 Strath Royal, 7-1 Wudimp, 12-1 Pennypot.

☐ Taufan's Melody (ridden by John Reid) and Mongol Warrior (Darryll Holland) contest the Prix Max Sicard at Toulouse tomorrow.

2.40 EMMERDALE SILVER ANNIVERSARY HANDICAP CHASE (£6,600: 2m 4f 110yd) (9)

1 PP-P EASBY JOKER 7 (CD,F,G,S) S Kettlewell 9-12-0 Mr C Bonner (3)
2 221- MACGEORGE 210 (CD,G,S) R Lee 7-11-10 ... P Niven
3 44F- RANDOM ASSAULT 289 (D,G) D Nicholson 8-11-10 Mr O McPhail (7)
4 -611 CUMBRIAN CHALLENGE 18 (CD,F,G,S) T Easterby 8-11-10 L Wyer
5 41-3 BEACHY HEAD 21 (CD,G,S) J J O'Neill 9-11-3 R McGrath (3)
6 11/F ISSYIN 7 (B,CD,F,G,S) M W Easterby 10-10-12 ... B Storey
7 -6P1 REAL TONIC 7 (D,F,G,S) G Richards 7-10-9 ... P Carberry
8 4342 MASTER BOSTON 7 (B,CD,F,G,S) R Woodhouse 9-10-1 W Dwan
9 144F REGAL ROMPER 15 (C,F,G,S) Mrs S Smith 9-10-0 R Wilkinson (5)

7-2 Real Tonic, 9-2 Cumbrian Challenge, 11-2 Macgeorge, Random Assault, Issyin, 7-1 Regal Romper, 8-1 Beachy Head, Master Boston, 16-1 Easby Joker.

3.15 RACING CHANNEL NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE (£2,945: 2m 4f 110yd) (15)

1 3-F8 SOUTHERN CROSS 3 (BF,S) M W Easterby 5-12-0 .. B Storey
2 020- LARKSHILL 224 J FitzGerald 6-11-6 ... P Carberry
3 -F31 SCOTTON GREEN 15 (D,G) T Easterby 6-10-11 ... L Wyer
4 1302 REACH THE CLOUDS 9 (G) J Upson 5-10-10 ... R Supple
5 4P/5 OUR MAIN MAN 19F (S) R Whitaker 7-10-9 ... D Bentley
6 P4-P WHAT JIM WANTS 25 J J O'Neill 4-10-6 ... D Jewett (7)
7 0-03 SECOND FIDDLE 11 O Brennan 7-10-3 ... M Brennan
8 3040 ALIAS CHUBB 11 Mrs S Smith 6-10-2 ... R Wilkinson (5)
9 -682 RAINING STAIRS 26 (BF) G Richards 6-10-0 ... R Burns (7)
10 0P-3 PRIMITIVE HEART 12 H Alexander 5-10-0 ... R McGrath (3)
11 5-3P DAN DE MAN 14 Miss L Siddall 6-10-0 ... M Foster
12 0/4- EFAAD 394 J Norton 6-10-0 ... G Lee (3)
13 6344- MOONLIGHT VENTURE 9 M Wane 5-10-0 ... J Callaghan
14 6/0- MISTY GREY 545 G Fierro 8-10-0 ... Mr O McPhail (7)
15 00-0 BONNY RIGG 24 L Lungo 5-10-0 ... W Dowling (7)

11-4 Raining Stairs, 9-2 Scotton Green, 13-2 Southern Cross, Larkshill, 8-1 Reach The Clouds, Second Fiddle, 10-1 Primitive Heart, 12-1 others.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: Mrs M Reveley, 52 winners from 194 runners, 26.8%; D Nicholson, 17 from 64, 26.6%; G Richards, 28 from 117, 23.9%; T Easterby, 17 from 77, 22.1%; O Brennan, 4 from 23, 17.4%; L Lungo, 5 from 31, 16.1%; J Fitzgerald, 15 from 97, 15.5%; Mrs S Smith, 15 from 104, 14.4%.

JOCKEYS: P Niven, 47 winners from 178 rides, 26.3%; P Carberry, 11 from 44, 25.0%; L Wyer, 39 from 164, 23.8%; R Guest, 17 from 81, 21.0%; M Brennan, 4 from 26, 15.4%; G Lee, 3 from 23, 13.0%; Mr C Bonner, 3 from 28, 10.7%.

Racing next week

MONDAY: **Southwell** (AW, first race 1.00), Ludlow (12.35), Musselburgh (12.20).

TUESDAY: Huntingdon (12.30), Plumpton (12.40), Sedgefield (12.50).

WEDNESDAY: **Lingfield Park** (AW, 1.10), Hexham (12.50), Leicester (1.00).

THURSDAY: Fakenham (12.40), Market Rasen (12.50), Taunton (1.00).

FRIDAY: **Lingfield Park** (AW, 12.40), Cheltenham (C4, 12.45), Doncaster (12.05).

SATURDAY: Cheltenham (C4, 12.45); Doncaster (12.05), Haydock Park (BBC, 12.40), Lingfield Park (12.30), **Wolverhampton** (AW, 7.00).

Flat meetings in bold

TOWCESTER

THUNDERER

12.45 Quistaquay. 1.20 Museum. 1.50 Rakazona Beau. 2.25 Ehtefaal. 3.00 Price's Hill. 3.30 Muskhill.

GOING: SOFT SIS

12.45 EBF STOKE PARK NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (Qualifier: £3,008: 2m 5f) (12 runners)

1 50-5 BEN EIGER 10 N Twiston-Davies 5-10-12 ... J Goldstein (7)
2 0/ CROSS THE RUBICON 595 C Brooks 6-10-12 ... M Berry (7)
3 6/22 IN THE BLOOD 12 (G,S) P Hobbs 6-10-12 ... G Tormey
4 0P-2 JET FILES 19 Mrs J Pitman 6-10-12 ... D Leahy
5 0 MAJESTIC AFFAIR 24 N Henderson 5-10-12 ... J R Kavanagh
6 -412 QUISTAQUAY 19 (BF,C,S) J Mullins 5-10-12 ... P Henley (3)
7 /032 SWYNFORD PRIDE 14 (F) J Hetherton 5-10-12 ... D Byrne
8 0-0 BARTON LIL 31 S Brookshaw 5-10-7 ... S Wynne
9 U JULIAE 10 Mrs P Robeson 5-10-7 ... B Powell
10 003- LUCRATIVE PERK 211 Miss C Caroe 5-10-7 ... C Webb (5)
11 P- PENNYAHEI 299 S Brookshaw 6-10-7 ... Miss H Brookshaw (7)
12 60- WINNETKA GAL 369 N Twiston-Davies 5-10-7 ... W Marston

5-2 Quistaquay, 3-1 In The Blood, 9-2 Swynford Pride, 5-1 Jet Files, 10-1 Majestic Affair, Lucrative Perk, 12-1 Winnetka Gal, 20-1 others.

1.20 PURY END CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS HANDICAP HURDLE (£1,895: 2m) (10)

1 5-P0 SPRINTFAYRE 31 (CD,F,G,S) J Long 9-11-10 . G Gallagher (7)
2 -PP2 AINSI SOIT IL 5 (B,G,S) G McCourt 6-11-9 ... Guy Lewis
3 12-4 MUSEUM 22 (S) P Winkworth 6-11-7 ... X Aizpuru
4 F-06 UNITED FRONT 8 (S) J Neville 5-11-0 ... T Dascombe
5 34F- BE BRAVE 282 (S) T Etherington 7-10-10 ... L Cummins
6 0-43 KNIGHTSBRIDGE GIRL 18 I Williams 6-10-10 ... E Husband
7 6-45 BLAZE OF SONG 7 D Wintle 5-10-8 ... E Callaghan
8 33P- CAMBO 194 (C,D,F,G,S) M Banks 11-10-6 .. W Greatrex (5)
9 -31U MEMORY'S MUSIC 17 (S) M Madgwick 5-10-0 ... J Power
10 -5P2 MEGA TID 14 J Poulton 5-10-0 ... J Goldstein (3)

5-2 Ainsi Soit Il, 9-2 Museum, 13-2 Sprintfayre, Knightsbridge Girl, 7-1 Blaze Of Song, Memory's Music, 12-1 United Front, Be Brave, Cambo, Mega Tid.

1.50 TOTE NOVICES CHASE (Qualifier: £3,966: 2m 6f) (10)

1 0U-4 BANK AVENUE 50 M Pitman 6-11-0 ... W Marston
2 /6-2 HENRY CONE 24 (G) Miss V Williams 6-11-0 ... S Kelly (7)
3 531- LOTTERY TICKET 204 (G,S) T George 8-11-0 ... S Wynne
4 323- MITCHELLS BEST 224P (G,S) A Hollingsworth 11-11-0 Guy Lewis (3)
5 1/5- RAKAZONA BEAU 320 (G) Simon Earle 7-11-0 ... B Powell
6 /P-0 SPANISH RIVER 23 N Lampard 6-11-0 ... A Bates (5)
7 00-3 TEXAN BABY 20 (D,G,S) N Twiston-Davies 8-11-0 J Goldstein (7)
8 P0-0 THE MEXICANS GONE 10 (D,S) O Geraghty 9-11-0 . V Slattery
9 3-8P COUNTRY STORE 10 (D,S) A P Jones 8-10-9 ... G Upton
10 3-55 FORTYTWO DEE 11 N Smith 7-10-9 ... M Sharratt

11-4 Lottery Ticket, Texan Baby, 9-2 Henry Cone, 7-1 Mitchells Best, 10-1 Bank Avenue, Fortytwo Dee, 12-1 Rakazona Beau, The Mexicans Gone, 20-1 others.

☐ Trying Again is to run in the Tripleprint Gold Cup at Cheltenham next Saturday, his trainer, David Gandolfo, confirmed yesterday. "I was pleased with him in the Hennessy as he didn't get the trip and the step down will suit him at Cheltenham," Gandolfo said.

2.25 SYLVIA MARSHALL HANDICAP HURDLE (£2,443: 3m) (12)

1 031- GRUNGE 302 (CD,S) D Murray Smith 9-11-10 ... G Upton
2 12-5 EHTEFAAL 30 (C,F,G) J King 6-11-8 ... J Culloty
3 5-22 BANNY HILL LAD 10 (B) C Morlock 7-11-7 ... J R Kavanagh
4 0-12 DANGER FLYNN 11 (D,G) Mrs P Sly 7-11-5 ... W Marston
5 P-12 RIVER CHALLENGE 31 (G) J Upson 6-11-4 ... G Supple (5)
6 44-3 NEEDWOOD POPPY 9 (G) B Morgan 9-10-10 ... B Clifford
7 21P2 ST MELLION LEISURE 23 (F) N Hawke 5-10-9 . J A McCarthy
8 1521 SAUCY NUN 14 (F,G) P Hiatt 5-10-8 ... E Husband (3)
9 01B- CLONGOUR 238 (F) P Hobbs 7-10-8 ... G Tormey
10 14-4 WORKINGFORPEANUTS 14 (D,F,S) C Smith 7-10-0 V Slattery
11 U004 HYDEMILLA 15 Mrs T Pilkington 7-10-0 ... C Webb (5)
12 0/3- MEGAMUNCH 471 R Juckes 9-10-0 ... Gary Lyons

7-2 Banny Hill Lad, 5-1 Grunge, Saucy Nun, 7-1 Danger Flynn, St Mellion Leisure 8-1 River Challenge, 10-1 Workingforpeanuts, Ehtefaal, 12-1 Clongour, 14-1 others

3.00 N L M HANDICAP CHASE (£4,401: 3m 1f) (7)

1 10P- SIR LEONARD 257 (BF,S) D Sherwood 7-12-0 J A McCarthy
2 1142 CAROLE'S CRUSADER 20 (F,G) D Gandolfo 6-12-0 . G Upton
3 PP4- HAVE TO THINK 228 (D,F,S) P Nicholls 9-11-12 L Cummins (5)
4 320- A N C EXPRESS 294 (S) J King 9-11-9 ... J Culloty
5 /21- PRICE'S HILL 352 (CD,S) K Bailey 10-11-6 ... P Henley (3)
6 13-1 FORTUNES COURSE 30 (CD,F,G,S) J King 8-10-13 W Marston
7 4-33 HILL TRIX 7 (CD,S) K Bishop 11-10-3 ... R Greene

2-1 Carole's Crusader, 4-1 Price's Hill, Fortunes Course, 11-2 Sir Leonard, 8-1 Have To Think, A N C Express, Hill Trix.

3.30 WEATHERBYS STARS OF TOMORROW OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE (£1,371: 2m) (16)

1 11 MUSKHILL 18 (G,S) D Nicholson 6-12-0 ... R Massey (3)
2 1- LEWESDON MANOR 199 (D,S) P R Webber 6-11-11 J R Kavanagh
3 P31- BALLYBOLLEN 231P (S) C Brooks 5-11-4 ... M Berry (7)
4 BROGANIER Mrs J Pitman 5-11-4 ... D Leahy
5 3- BRUSH WITH FAME 248 P Hobbs 5-11-4 ... G Tormey
6 0 COUNT JOE 27 J Jefferson 4-11-4 ... E Callaghan
7 24- COUNTRYMAN 295 T George 6-11-4 ... S Wynne
8 DEMI CENTURY Mrs J Pitman 5-11-4 ... R Garrard (7)
9 ERIN ALLEY P R Webber 4-11-4 ... J A McCarthy
10 FATHER McCARTEN M Pitman 4-11-4 ... B Powell
11 FOUNTAIN VILLE M Madgwick 4-11-4 ... J Power (7)
12 MARKET SPRINGER J L Harris 6-11-4 ... J Supple
13 POLKERRIS J King 6-11-4 ... J Culloty
14 25/ SILENT ACTION 643 N Smith 5-11-4 ... M Sharratt
15 CRAZY CRUSADER D Gandolfo 5-10-13 ... G Upton
16 PPP- SHARP ALICE 215P A Hollingsworth 6-10-13 .. Guy Lewis (3)

8-11 Muskhill, 7-1 Broganier, Demi Century, 8-1 Lewesdon Manor, 10-1 Brush With Fame, 12-1 Countryman, 14-1 Ballybollen, 16-1 others.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: Simon Earle, 4 winners from 6 runners, 66.7%; D Nicholson, 28 from 72, 38.9%; Miss V Williams, 4 from 11, 36.4%; J Long, 3 from 11, 27.3%; Mrs J Pitman, 11 from 46, 23.9%; J Jefferson, 4 from 18, 22.2%; K Bailey, 12 from 60, 20.0%; N Henderson, 8 from 41, 19.5%

JOCKEYS: E Callaghan, 3 winners from 8 rides, 37.5%; D Byrne, 4 from 19, 21.1%; R Massey, 3 from 19, 15.8%; W Marston, 10 from 88, 11.4%. Only qualifiers.

Blinkered first time

CHEPSTOW: 3.20 Spring Double. WETHERBY: 2.40 Master Boston. WOLVERHAMPTON: 1.35 Dance To The Beat. 2.10 Zermatt. 2.45 Mr Majica. 3.55 Rex Mundi

Dorans Pride returns

DORANS PRIDE, Ireland's leading Cheltenham Gold Cup hope, has the opportunity to deliver a swift reply to Suny Bay at Fairyhouse tomorrow. The eight-year-old has been displaced at the head of some Cheltenham betting lists by last Saturday's impressive Hennessy Cognac Gold Cup winner.

However, his big-race odds may well shorten if he disposes of his rivals in the Ir£35,000 grade one Hot Power Chase with authority. Dorans Pride's only defeat in nine completed outings over fences came when he finished third to Mr Mulligan in the Gold Cup as a novice last season.

He will again be ridden by Richard Dunwoody, who has already steered him to victories in both the Kerry National at Listowel and the Morris Oil Chase at Clonmel this term.

Klairon Davis was declared for the race, but will run instead in the Mitsubishi Shogun Tingle Creek Chase at Sandown this afternoon, a race for which he will start favourite. A spokeswoman for his trainer, Arthur Moore, said: "He has been declared only as a precaution in case Sandown is off."

In the almost certain absence of Klairon Davis, the pick of Dorans Pride's remaining four opponents look to be Merry Gale and Opera Hat, first and second over 2½ miles at Naas last month.

The division of opinion over the respective merits of the leading British and Irish challengers is summed up by the Gold Cup quotes from Ladbrokes and William Hill. Ladbrokes has Dorans Pride at the head of its market at 5-1, followed by 6-1 Suny Bay, 7-1 The Grey Monk and 10-1 others.

William Hill, however, has Suny Bay leading the betting at 6-1, offering 7-1 Dorans Pride, 8-1 The Grey Monk and 12-1 others.

Big-race field

2.10 HOT POWER CHASE (Grade I: £22,750: 2m 4f) (6)

1-11 DORANS PRIDE 31 (CD,F,G,S) trained by M Hourigan 8-12-0 (ridden by R Dunwoody); 41-1 KLAIRON DAVIS 45 (C,G,S) A L Moore 8-12-0 (—); 2-41 MERRY GALE 15 (CD,G,S) J Dreaper 9-12-0 (N Williamson); 15F-CORKET 228 (D,G,S) A P O'Brien 7-11-8 (C F Swan); 21-P JEFFELL 15 (G,S) A L Moore 7-11-8 (C O'Dwyer); 312 OPERA HAT 15 (BF,D,G,S) J Fowler 9-11-3 (P Carberry).

10-11 Dorans Pride, 3-1 Klairon Davis, 13-2 Jeffell, 8-1 Merry Gale, Opera Hat, 12-1 Corket.

ALFA ROMEO

ARENA, DERBY • 01332 375330
- 97R Alfa 155 2.0 TS, Alfa Red, Leather, Sunroof ....P.O.A.
- 97P Alfa Spider 2.0 TS Lusso, Acid Green, PAS, ABS .£21,950
- 96P Alfa 145 2.0 TS Cloverleaf, Met Red, Sunroof ..£13,250
- 97P Alfa 155 2.0 TS, Alfa Red, Sunroof, Alloys, ABS .£12,995
- 97P Alfa 146 1.6 TS, Met Green, PAS, ABS, Alloys. £12,995

ARNOLD CLARK, EDINBURGH • 0131 444 1673
- 96P Alfa Spider Lusso, Tropical Green, Lthr, A/C ...£22,988
- 96N Alfa GTV Lusso, Atoll Blue, Lthr, A/C, S/Roof ...£17,988
- 95N Alfa 164 3.0 Super, Genoa Blue, Alloys, ABS . £13,488
- 96P Alfa 155 1.8 TS 16v, Silver White, ABS, Alloys ...£11,688
- 95M Alfa 145 1.6, Met Blue, PAS, Remote C/L, E/W ...£7,288

ARNOLD CLARK, PERTH • 01738 638511
- 97R Alfa 145 1.6 TS, Atoll Blue, Alloys, ABS, P/S .....P.O.A.
- 97R Alfa 146 1.6 TS, Tropical Green, Sunroof, ABS ....P.O.A.
- 97P Alfa GTV 2.0 TS 16v, Alfa Red, CD, Quick Rack £19,988
- 96P Alfa 146ti, Black, Quick Rack Steering, CD £12,988
- 96P Alfa 146 Boxer, Bordeaux Red, Sunroof, P/S £7,688

AUTOITALIA, COVENTRY • 01203 221144
- 96P Alfa Spider Lusso 2.0 TS, Black, Leather, A/C .£22,995
- 96N Alfa GTV 2.0 TS, Red, Alloys, ABS £18,495
- 96P Alfa 164 2.0 TS Super, Met Red, Electric Roof. £16,995
- 97P Alfa 155 2.0 TS Super, Met Red, Electric Roof ..£14,995
- 97P Alfa 145 2.0 TS Cloverleaf, Silver, Alloys, CD ...£14,495

CALEDONIA, PRESTON • 01772 555800
- 97R Alfa GTV Lusso, Met Black, Red Momo, A/C, ABS P.O.A.
- 96P Alfa 164 2.0 Super Lusso, Petroleum, ESR, ABS £13,995
- 97P Alfa 146ti, Titanium, ABS, PAS, Alarm, CD, Alloys £13,495
- 97P Alfa 155 2.0 TS 16v, Proteo Red, Alloys, ABS ...£13,495
- 96N Alfa 146 1.7 16v, Titanium, ESR, Alloys, ABS, PAS £8,495

FISH BROTHERS, SWINDON • 01793 512065
- 96P Alfa GTV Lusso, Proteo Red, Leather, Air Con £19,995
- 96N Alfa 145 Cloverleaf, Alfa Red, CD, ABS, Alloys £12,500
- 94M Alfa 164 3.0 Cloverleaf, Grey Leather, Air Con £10,995
- 93L Alfa 33 1.7ie, Metallic Green, Sunroof, PAS £4,995

HERBERT ROBINSON, CAMBRIDGE • 01223 242222
- 97R Alfa GTV Lusso, Atoll Blue, Natural Momo Lthr ..P.O.A.
- 97P Alfa 164 3.0 V6, Black, Air Con, CD, Alloys £20,995
- 96P Alfa GTV Lusso, Met Black, Sunroof, CD..............£19,995
- 96P Alfa 146ti, Titanium, Sunroof, CD £13,995
- 95N Alfa 145 1.6, Red, Sunroof, FSH £7,995

IAN SKELLY, LIVERPOOL • 0151 254 2000
- 97R Alfa Spider 2.0 Twin Spark, Black, Red Lthr, E/R ..P.O.A.
- 97R Alfa 164 3.0 Super Auto, Met Plum, Alloys, ABS P.O.A.
- 97P Alfa 155 2.0 Sport, Proteo Red, Alloys, ABS, PAS £14,995
- 96P Alfa 155 2.0 Sport, Met Plum, Alloys, ABS, PAS £12,995
- 96P Alfa 146 1.6 Boxer, Met Blue, Alloys, Alarm, PAS £8,995

L.C. MOTORS, CWMBRAN • 01633 876411
- 96N Alfa 164 3.0 24v Super, Metallic Blue, ABS £16,495
- 96P Alfa 145 2.0 Cloverleaf, Alfa Red, ABS, CD £13,995
- 97P Alfa 155 2.0 TS 16v, Silver White, ABS, Alloys ..£13,995
- 97P Alfa 145 1.6 TS, Tropical Green, Alloys £12,295
- 95M Alfa 155 1.8 TS, Alfa Red, Alloys, ABS, E/W........£8,695

MILL GARAGES, TYNE & WEAR • 0191 519 2487
- 97R Alfa 146ti, Arctic Grey ....P.O.A.
- 97P Alfa 155 1.8, Proteo Red £11,995
- 96P Alfa 146 1.6 Lusso, Diamond White £10,995
- 96N Alfa 145 1.6, Silver White, Sunroof £9,995
- 95N Alfa 146 1.7 16v, Alfa Red, Sunroof, Alloys..........£8,995

NORTHGATE, CANTERBURY • 01227 765561
- 97R Alfa Spider Lusso, Met Grey, A/C, Alloys, ABS ...P.O.A.
- 96P Alfa 164 2.0 Twin Spark Super, Met Green, Alloys £17,250
- 96P Alfa 155 1.8 Twin Spark, Met Blue, Airbag, ABS ..£13,750
- 95M Alfa 145 1.7 16v, Met Blue, S/Roof, ABS, Alarm ..£8,795

PERRY'S, HUDDERSFIELD • 01484 432000
- 97R Alfa GTV, Tropical Green, Sunroof ............................P.O.A.
- 97P Alfa Spider Lusso, Titanium, Red Momo, E/H ..£24,995
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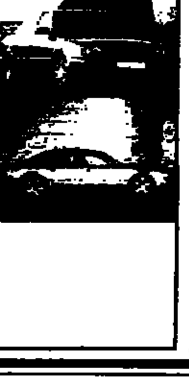

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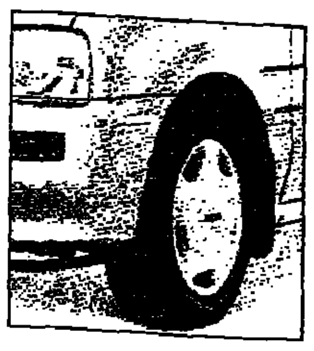

Cheapest car on Britain's roads

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SATURDAY DECEMBER 6 1997

When in Rome, do like Rover

Kevin Eason on why Sophia Loren and the rest of Italy see the old BL brand as the coolest on wheels

Crowds of Armani suits parted as she wafted into our midst like a goddess sent to dispense eternal wisdom to poor mortals lost in a great cosmic car park of dowdiness.

We waited anxiously for the whispered blessing, for could it be true? Yes, Sophia Loren thinks Rovers are stylish.

That's Sophia Loren, screen goddess and nearest equivalent in Italy to royalty. When she speaks, Italy listens — which is exactly what Rover was hoping for this week.

Anyone looking out at their driveway and thinking that their old Metro hatchback needs a wash will find this extremely difficult to believe, but in Italy, the name of Rover is actually chic.

That's Rover, one-time manufacturer of the staid, solid yet elegant motors nicknamed "doctors' cars" in the Fifties and Sixties, later unenviable member of the nationalised lame duck known as BL and now British offshoot of BMW.

In this country, we have so many confused ideas of Rover that we simply do not know what to believe. Every time the company reinvents itself with a new image, something comes along to explode all the effort.

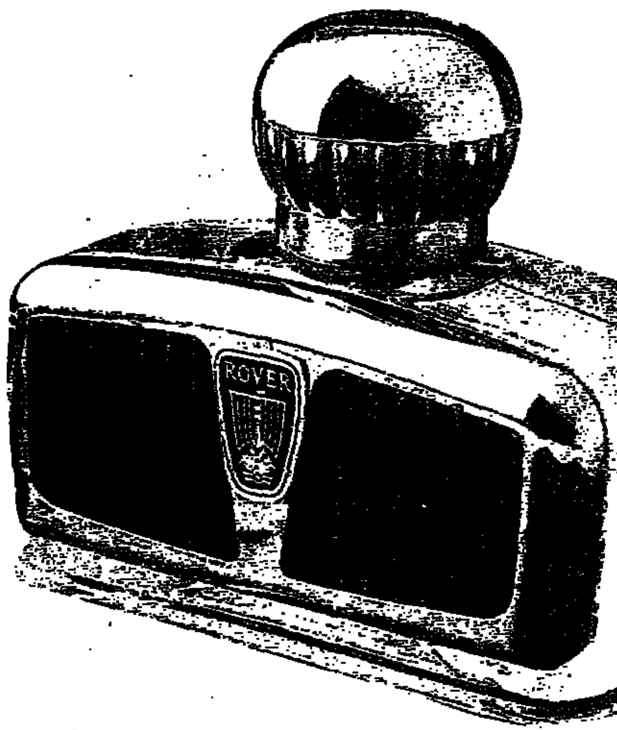
In a decade, Rover has been through three sets of owners and two major shifts in design, from 16 years of Honda-dependent cars since 1980 to brief months of freedom that produced the new Range Rover, MGF, Rover 200 and the Land Rover Freelander, until BMW exerted its control.

In Italy, there is no preconception about where Rover stands in the marketplace, no burden of history when it comes to writing out the cheque.

Which has probably helped to double sales in the past three years as the company aligns itself not in the category of safe, solid cars but in the elegant, stylish bracket filled in the boutiques of Italy by the likes of Versace and Armani.

So successful is the transformation that the late Gianni Versace owned a Range Rover, Giorgio Armani has one and both the Armani and Versace companies use Rovers as company cars.

Oh, and the goddess also has a Range Rover, £48,000 of wood and leather luxury in the best traditions of English carmaking, which is why she was at a dinner on the eve of the Bologna Motor Show to underline the fact that Rover can equal style.



Eau de Longbridge: for the girl with the classy chassis

The Queen's P5B at a Rover shop. No old Metros, though

All slightly unbelievable to cynical Brits, but there was La Loren squirting a new Rover perfume — only on sale in Italy — on her ample assets and warming to the theme of Rover as a designer label.

Journalists in Italy don't think it is hilarious that the bottle for the new unisex perfume — Essenziale by Rover — is in the shape of a Rover 600 radiator grille. It makes sense to them because the Rover 600 — a car almost forgotten in Britain's middle market melee — is considered cool there.

"Look, Rover has taken on the impossible and achieved something not even Fiat could do, establishing such an identifiable image," said one after the gala dinner in a remarkable private *palazzo* where La Loren glowed under ceilings painted by Leonardo da Vinci. (By the way, she is 63 and really is that beautiful).

More to the point, the company will sell up to 65,000 cars in Italy this year, its biggest export market with Rover the fastest growing brand — outselling Mercedes, BMW and all the Japanese marques.

Launching a perfume might seem spurious, but Salvatore Pistola, head of Rover Italia, says simply: "Why? We are selling a lifestyle, a way of owning a stylish car and everything that goes with it."

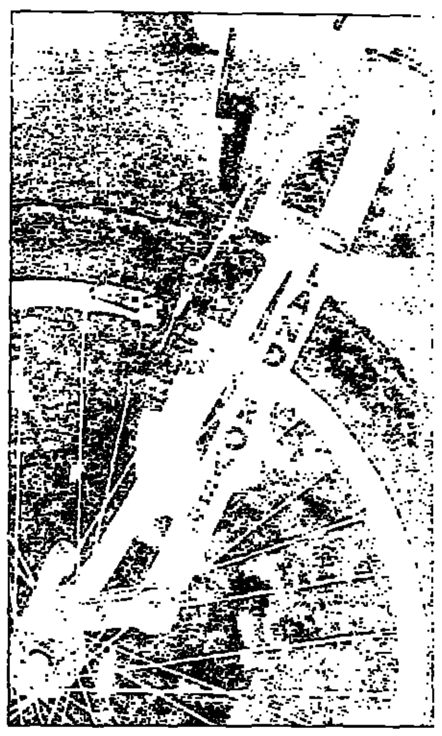
So Italian buyers don't just go to their local dealer to cough up the money and wander off. In Rome, they turn up at the Rover Village where the kids play with radio-controlled cars on a mini-racetrack while mum and dad browse the village's library to seek out details on the history of Rover, an independent magazine road test on the model of their choice or take a drink in the Rover pub while they think over the deal. Or simply browse the classic cars on loan from British Motor Heritage: a 1936 MG Magnette, 1907 Rover 8hp or the Queen's 1973 Rover P5B saloon. They can also buy the sweater, the watch, the bike, the boots, even the baby buggy . . . as well as the perfume, of course.

The concept is based on the notion that Italians will accept a Rover as a premium purchase, an accessory as stylish as an Armani suit, a Versace handbag.

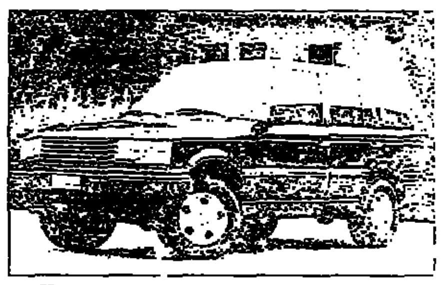
How long before the concept arrives here? Not long, which is why John Parkinson, the company's European boss, was in Bologna for an insight into Rover Italia's success. And as La Loren sprayed the new perfume on her perfectly formed *decolletage* in front of him, it must have seemed not just a thousand miles from Rover's Longbridge factory — but a world away.

La Loren is proud to drive, and even wear, Rover — which counts for a lot in Italy. Bambinos, above right, can grow up cool with Land Rover's buggy

Armani, Versace: now Land Rover's chic



Hip cycle: from Leyland to lifestyle



Off-road, as driven by the cognoscenti

Hundredth year of the club that nearly never started

Lord Montagu on the man whose big financial gamble began it all

One hundred years ago this week, the remarkable entrepreneur Frederick Simms organised the first general meeting of what was eventually to become the RAC — his new Automobile Club of Great Britain. He hoped it would "become a national institution having the real and true interest and development of the motor carriage movement at heart".

Simms had become frustrated by the way that the Motor-Car Club, which he had founded as the "Autocar Touring Club" in 1895, had been used for the questionable business interests of company promoter, Harry J. Lawson, and had resigned.

Aided by the disillusioned secretary of the M-CC, Harrington Moore, he then drew up a set of rules for an independent club modelled on the successful Automobile Club de France, which Simms had joined soon after its foundation in November 1895.

Though his old friend, the Hon Evelyn Ellis, had initially tried to dissuade Simms from setting up the Automobile Club, he willingly gave his support once he saw that Simms was determined to go ahead. Harrington Moore, as acting secretary of the proposed club, found suitable London premises at 4 Whitehall Court. Simms leased the building for three years and canvassed "gentlemen and friends".

RAC

The punctilious Simms graded the replies into the "Noes", the "Sympathisers" and the "Yesses", but of the 164 who had declared they would be willing to join the ACGB, a mere 30 turned up for its preliminary meeting on 10 August 1897. Ellis, who chaired the meeting, told his audience that he and Simms were prepared to pay £200 each into a guarantee fund for the club, and asked those present how much they would contribute to guarantee the new club's running costs. Not a hand went up: it looked as though the new club was stalled.

Then, in stage whisper, Simms said: "Ellis, put me in for the lot!" With the club's immediate future guaranteed, Simms and Harrington Moore set about organising a club that would — unlike the already discredited M-CC — "worthily represent in a truly national sense the best interests of what promises to be a great national industry".

On December 8, the "Today's Arrangements" column of *The Times* duly announced that the inaugural general meeting of the Automobile Club was to be held at Whitehall Court. Simms had enticed members of the press to the event with an invitation to lunch and the news that the meeting would be accompanied by a "demonstration of the most recent types of motor carriages."

Before long, Roger Wallace, QC, who had been appointed chairman, effected a merger between the Automobile Club and the rival Self-Propelled Traffic Association. The Automobile Club, which became "Royal" ten years after its foundation, was beginning to exert a strong influence on motoring in Britain.

Its future course became clear as early as February 1898, when a meeting suggested that the club cooperate with the Local Government Board in framing regulations for the design of motor vehicles.

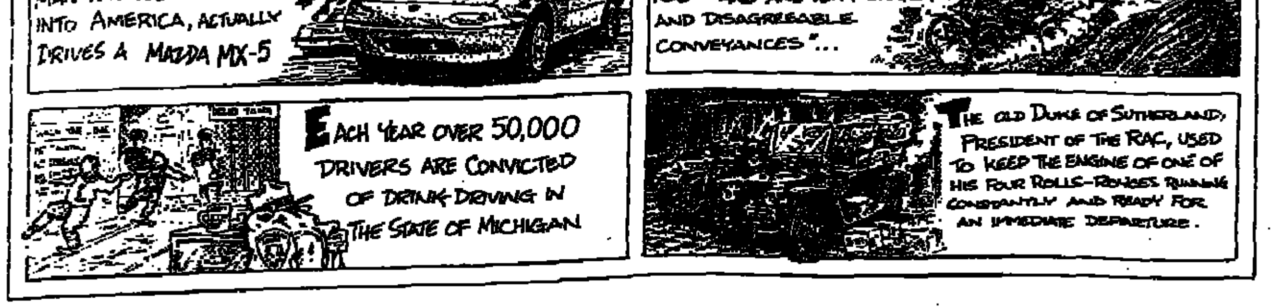
Henry Sturmey, the founding editor of *The Autocar*, suggested that the club should "endeavour to facilitate foreign travel in motor-vehicles . . . keep an eye on legislation which would be deterrent to the advancement of automobilism", and produce a map showing steep gradients to enable motorists to plan their journeys to suit their feeble power of their horseless carriages.

And Harrington Moore told members that the club was gathering information on "accommodation for motor-carriages . . . stores at which petrol and suitable oils may be purchased . . . electric charging stations . . . firms who undertake the repair of motor-vehicles [and] competent drivers".

It was the start of the tradition of RAC service that today looks after more than five million full and associate members. What a contrast with 1897, when just 163 "gentlemen interested in road locomotion" constituted the entire membership of the Automobile Club, owning a mere 60 to 70 motor vehicles between them.

Frederick Simms: entrepreneurial founder of the RAC

AUTOFAX by David Long and Les Evans



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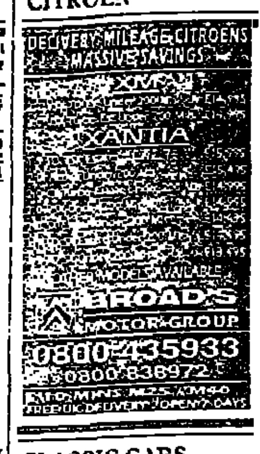

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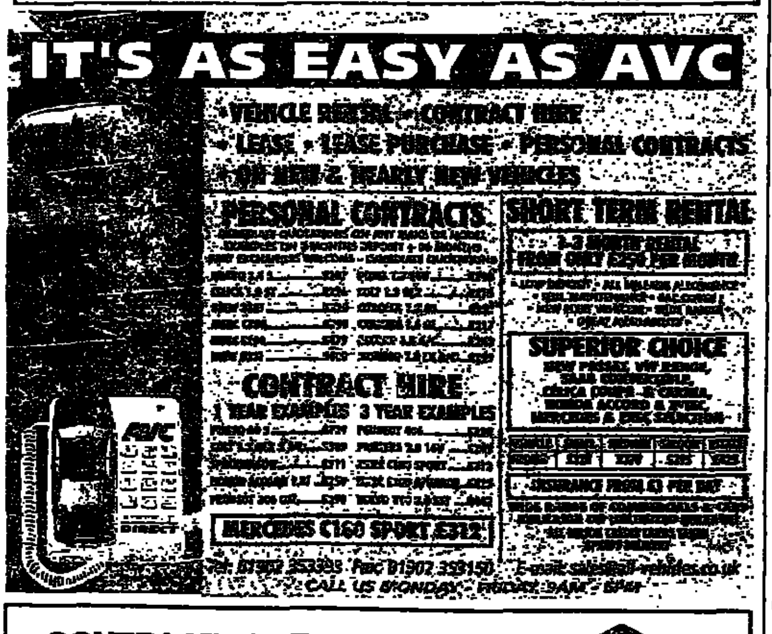

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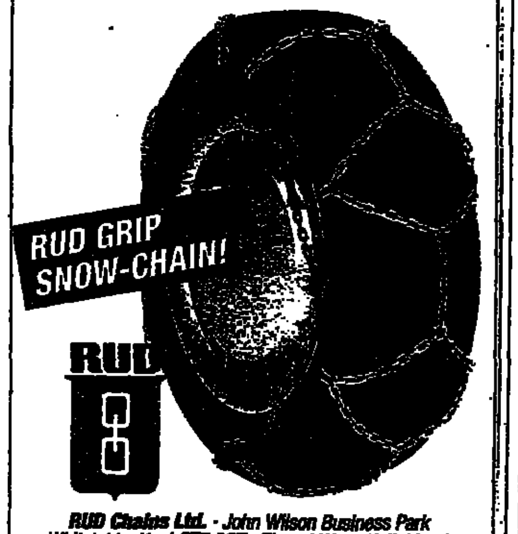

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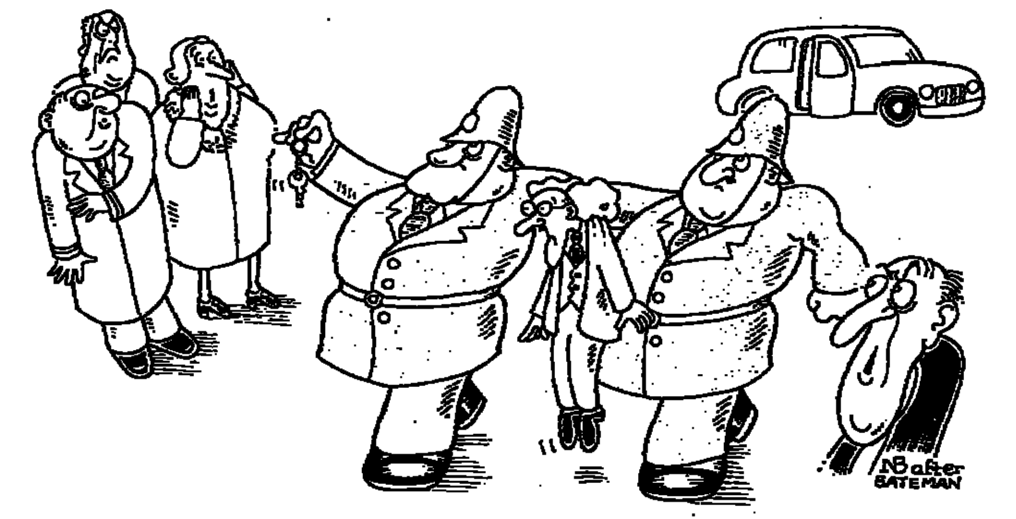
Labour is attacking motorists under the limit — so why not ban alcohol entirely?

Christmas drink-drive campaign deserves boos



THE MOTORIST WHO HAD BRANDY BUTTER ON HIS CHRISTMAS PUDDING

DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION

Peter Barnard

Every year at about this time the Government launches the Christmas drink-drive campaign, and every year, although I am averse to being thought predictable, I feel an obligation to reinforce the message. But this year I also feel obliged to tell the new Government that its nanny-knows-best tendencies are beginning to get on my wick.

I have thought for years that the ultimate in drink-drive sanctions would be a change in the law making it illegal to have anything at all to drink before driving. Labour is clearly heading that way with the heavily leaked plan to reduce the alcohol limit.

We would all know where we were with a law that said that you cannot drink at all if you drive. In the meantime, the law does not say that, but the Government is trying to give the impression that it does. The Christmas campaign launched this week is the worst in my memory, in that it both patronises and insults motorists, which is hardly the best way to get people on your side.

The posters carry the words "You again?" in large type with the slogan, "have none for the road" underneath in smaller type. Other advertisements show four drivers claiming to be responsible because they only have a small amount to drink before driving. This attitude is then mocked with the words "responsible… for killing, crippling and maiming thousand of people in drink-drive accidents".

This is absurd. People who improve their behaviour deserve to have that improvement recognised, not ridiculed. Every teacher and every sensible parent knows that a child who spelt 20 words wrongly a month ago but now spells only two incorrectly should be praised, not condemned for the remaining errors.

Obviously I am not advocating posters that thank people for "only" having one glass of wine or *half a pint of shandy*. But alcohol used to be entrenched in the social life of this country and I believe that the vast majority of people have done well to discipline themselves not to indulge in it when they are driving.

Yet here we have a campaign that makes ludicrous connections. Apparently people with small amounts of alcohol inside them routinely "cripple" others. The Christmas campaign literature that I have seen makes no prominent mention of drugs, so presumably the Government chooses to think that one bitter shandy is lethal enough to warrant ridiculing motorists, but driving under the influence of cocaine is of little consequence.

There has long been an intrinsic weakness in the Christmas campaign. If it is wrong to drink and drive at Christmas then it is clearly wrong at all other times of the year, but the emphasis on Christmas, though understandable, tends to imply that drink-driving at other times is not quite so reprehensible.

The problem is not only that a large part of the publicity budget goes into the Christmas campaign. That is also true of the police budget, so that drinkers are aware that the risk of being caught at Christmas is much higher than at other times of the year. There are obvious dangers here and the Government would do better to attend to them rather than spending time and money treating drivers, including responsible drivers, like errant schoolchildren.

None of which is meant to suggest that I have gone soft on drink-driving. It is obvious that if several drinks affect one's ability to drive, one drink must also do so. But it is also true that heart attacks at the wheel contribute to a significant number of accidents every year, and most doctors now say that a glasss of wine a day reduces the risk of heart attack. Therefore it is simplistic to imply that every drop of alcohol that passes the lips of a driver reduces him or her to the status of a callous killer.

If the Government is so convinced of the evils of drink that it will put out posters gratuitously insulting motorists who so much as stand in a pub doorway to shelter from the rain, then surely it is about time Labour went the whole hog and proposed amended legislation making it illegal to drive with any alcohol in the blood.

Unless of course the Christmas campaign is just a good excuse to let the public relations lads loose with their invective — always a handy substitute for doing something constructive.

With its super-short chassis and low-slung seats, the Nippa offers surprisingly good headroom

Nippa, son of Mini, is a snip of a car

Alan Copps gets an attack of basic nostalgia driving around in Britain's cheapest little mover

My first impressions of this car were oddly familiar: the wheels at each corner looked toy-like, and once seated, my bottom seemed very near the ground, yet there was far more headroom than one should expect in something less than 11ft long.

There was a lot of internal space, a very short bonnet and a feeling that my feet on the pedals were only inches away from the engine. But nothing could be stranger than the name: this was a Perodua Nippa, made in Malaysia and imported to Britain since August.

Then I remembered where that familiar sensation came from: it was what I'd experienced about 30 years ago when I first drove a Mini.

Of course, the world has moved on. Unlike an early Mini this Nippa boasts four doors, a five-speed gearbox, side-impact beams, height-adjustable headlamps, an engine immobiliser, remote hatch release and a two-year warranty.

But like the early Mini, it is the cheapest car in Britain. At £5,886.05 on the road it undercuts the Kia Pride (£6,064), the Suzuki Alto (£6,175) and its close relative the Daihatsu Cuore (£6,500).

It beats the cheapest Fiat Cinquecento (£6,647) by almost £800. Although it certainly can't match the fun afforded by the rather more expensive Sporting version of the Cinquecento.

This oddly exotic world of the super-cheap car makes sophisticated superminis like the class-leading Volkswagen Polo (£8,145), Citroen's fast-selling Saxo (£8,195) and the stylish Ford Ka (£7,995) look astronomical in price. But even Ian Robertson, managing director of the importers, is happy to accept that this is strictly a town car.

There it lives up to its name. The steering is precise, the acceleration — with only the driver on board — is surprisingly brisk, and although it is nearly a foot longer than the original Mini masterpiece, there's a lot of satisfaction to be had squeezing it through the kind of gap usually claimed by motorcycle dispatch riders.

On the open road it shares the Mini's limitations, which have long been overcome by the likes of the Polo and Saxo. My two satirically minded older children burst into spontaneous applause when the speedometer struggled up to 70mph on the motorway. But then road-testers' children do tend to get spoilt riding around in all kinds of exotic machinery.

"You've got to remember this car has five doors; that sets it apart in this class and it will return an average of 53mpg," says Robertson. "I've driven it on the motorway. I wouldn't want to do that every day, but it's quite adequate."

I came away thinking that the Nippa is likely to remain an interesting little curiosity rather than a mainstream car. But the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, could change that. "With all the concern about urban congestion, I think we might find in the next budget we get a boost," says Robertson.

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97 911 6spd Black Met/Black 4T
97P 911 6spd Black Met/Marble 4T
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0850 716911
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96N 911 Targa Iris, Air 21T
95N 911 Cab Tip Silver, Air.........15T
96N 911 Targa Tara Air 18T
93L 911 3.6 Turbo Midnight, Air ...26T
93L 911 Turbo 3.3 White, Air.......18T
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584 AAC
383 ABD
ABJ 74
ABS 100
6136 AC
836 ACE
ACM 258
ACR 199
4889 AD
164 ADL
780 ADM
ADT 215
AFB 100
AFC 11
M15 AJC
460 AJD
AJG 719
P11 AJS
60 AK
ALE 372
160 ALF
502 ALG
997 ALJ
947 ALR
M15 AMB
867 AMW
480 ANR
909 APC
APM 572
A8J 504
70 ASW
AW 515
16 BB
738 BCA
BCE 5
18 BE
16 BEN
BGH 8
67 BHW
75 BJ
111 BJB
33 BJO
BJT 440
7 BKB
BMD 936
24 BMM
3 BN
BNJ 19
803 BNM
513 BOB
600 BOF
99 BP
BPH 560
BPJ 4
684 BPW
BR 58
6 BRG
79 BRT
BS 6714
BSK 999
BW 5064
892 CAB
743 CAJ
3001 CD
CF 65
1 CFA
211 CFW
CHD 15
CJ 130
420 CJD
479 CJF
CJS 812
504 CJW
50 CK
CKL 674
60 CL
144 CMH
805 CNR
J2 COB
22 COP
440 CPB
CPF 800
650 CPG
CPH 927
CRL 963
CRM 81
218 CRW
CS 76
CSB 739
1 CSD
1 CSG
CSJ 423
CSK 888
CSM 686
CT 7
45 CTG
CTS 60
CWS 20
812 DA
865 DAC
DAK 60
314 DAL
780 DAN
88 DAS
327 DBL
12 DD
123 DDD
DEB 10
44 DEF
DF 319
85 DFR
50 DHR
DJ 8829
A43 DJB
DJF 694
M15 DJS
526 DK
1500 DM
105 DMP
888 DOC
DOT 616
430 DPA
274 DPH
DPL 357
DR 2308
68 DRA
EB 4822
5 EC
238 ED
EFL 111
11 EL
98 ER
47 ES
208 EVE
51 FAT
500 FBJ
FDC 700
13 FEB
1 FES
1 FGR
FGT 40
9 FH
10 FJ
FJL 137
FJM 679
FJR 601
FLC 666
FPB 280
666 FRY
4 FTR
GAB 601
323 GAR
98 GB
51 GBC
GCM 20
GDB 788
GF 6
98 GG
GJL 200
999 GL
999 GMC
1 GNR
GO G1L
100 GRT
GS 151
GTS 7
1 HDR
1 HFL
HJS 661
21 HMC
11 HO
999 HS
JA 1682
934 JAC
434 JAG
JAK 469
15 JAY
642 JBM
161 JBP
JCA 548
JCH 319
JCK 473
JCW 307
JCR 804
11 JDB
JDL 110
JDR 136
1 JDY
JEC 253
30 JEF
JEL 174
JES 234
JET 49
13 JFR
JFS 330
11 JGT
JGW 753
3141 JH
JHC 287
2 JHR
51 JKA
JL 38
JLB 401
JLM 659
221 JM
JML 338
JMS 1
JMY 95
80 JO
149 JON
14 JPA
JPC 280
JPS 22
5 JRS
JS 6846
1 JSR
JTS 745
11 JUG
8 JW
JWB 46
14 JWC
44 JWD
9 JWS
70 KAR
KGR 95
KLW 58
KR 1364
KRD 27
KST 90
550 KT
488 LAB
815 LAF
3 LAN
50 LAP
LAW 90
LBD 50
LCM 325
LCT 90
LCW 670
50 LEN
LEO 32
LES 958
2 LEW
LFH 69
LFT 7
LPW 519
110 LG
LGB 58
LJ 681
LJD 512
89 LJS
11 LL
75 LMG
100 LP
366 LPB
1 LPW
LR 272
75 LRM
LRN 37
LS 7772
LSB 427
LYN 844
40 MAC
MBH 140
8880 MC
5 MCM
MCW 91
3653 MD
MEB 2
MES 90
MFA 54
MFW 225
8005 MG
1 MGD
MGW 748
4584 MH
194 MHW
MJ 6394
88 MJD
783 MJH
MJT 927
1 MKH
580 MLG
MLJ 760
218 MM
MNB 6
MP 4700
947 MPB
87 MPD
60 MR
MRD 230
MRS 4
MTB 728
400 MTR
MWC 26
10 NAM
NBD 7
ND 148
42 NED
NMB 500
NSF 66
1 NTP
ODD 544
OPL 8
911 P
60 PAR
PBD 14
PBM 381
PCR 812
PDF 70
2 PEL
PJT 632
PKS 100
PMC 26
1 PSF
PTF 22
PTG 67
PUF 40
40 PW
RAB 300
406 RAF
RAG 4
RAH 171
RAP 423
RB 75
RBM 1
RCW 61
RDL 15
RDW 44
REF 334
REJ 38
RFS 11
RJA 671
8 RLD
RLM 229
93 RM
777 RMA
367 RMC
628 RMH
60 RN
ROY 679
402 RPC
RPM 66
RPW 931
RS 259
RSG 6
2 RSH
SAD 996
SAP 174
1 SBC
SBM 537
2870 SC
SCJ 27
SCP 985
SCT 62
17 SD
SDL 21
9 SH
SJD 448
SJR 766
98 SK
SKF 100
SL 943
SLD 533
323 SMF
1 SOV
SPA 84
SPC 65
SWB 16
SYL 143
TAM 320
TBK 1
TCL 100
TDR 680
TDW 325
980 TED
TFL 80
77 TJ
1 TJA
TLR 852
TMW 846
TNL 189
TOP 90
3 TP
313 TPA
TPF 8
25 TPC
221 TPH
TR 952
TRB 322
TRH 127
TRS 232
TRW 12
777 TUR
TV 2
TWH 6
TWS 90
50 U
UNA 759
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82 WAL
WJB 761
WLC 604
60 WM
99 WS
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DVLA CLASSIC

AUCTION OF PERSONALISED REGISTRATIONS

at The Pittville Pump Room, Cheltenham, on Thursday 18th December 1997

18 A
A1 CES
A1 MAX
A1 TVR
A1 VAL
A6 HAK
72 AA
45 AB
999 AC
40 AD
123 AE
911 AEB
19 AF
10 AFB
444 AG
321 AJ
47 AK
88 AL
65 AM
81 AN
91 ANS
16 ANT
25 AP
50 AR
77 AS
13 ASH
123 AT
80 AV
15 AW
25 AY
80 B
B10 BBY
B15 TOS
B15 TRO
B3 CKY
55 BA
111 BB
1001 BC
60 BD
77 BE
BED 11R
BEK 11R
30 BG
70 BH
16 BJ
200 BK
60 BL
55 BM
777 BP
77 BR
44 BS
123 BT
BUG 1E
60 BW
17 C
C4 ROL
CAS 4
321 CB
60 CC
25 CD
71 CE
321 CF
16 CG
70 CH
222 CJ
80 CK
10 CKS
18 CL
25 CM
16 CN
16 CP
80 CS
333 CSD
44 CT
18 CW
D1 PLO
D14 BLO
D15 COS
21 DA
DAN 60N
DAS 321
11 DAW
11 DB
1 DBN
44 DC
5 DCS
19 DD
98 DE
16 DEB
DER 111K
12 DF
20 DG
21 DH
321 DJ
77 DK
777 DL
20 DM
60 DN
9 DNB
51 DR
13 DS
14 DT
50 DW
13 E
12 EA
EAG 1L
18 EB
65 EC
21 ED
111 EE
999 EF
22 EH
53 EK
1 EKB
20 EL
12 EN
END 1N
15 EP
1 EPN
18 ER
63 ES
1 ESA
25 ET
22 EW
20 FA
17 FB
55 FC
10 FD
18 FH
12 FL
10 FM
19 FR
10 FTY
123 FW
81 G
G1 SUE
G11 DAY
44 GA
19 GB
25 GC
30 GD
20 GE
GEM 111
123 GEO
99 GF
1 GFD
38 GG
24 GH
99 GJ
16 GK
13 GL
123 GM
50 GN
GOM 1S
GOR 6T
60 GP
22 GR
60 GS
1800 GT
246 GTS
18 GW
60 H
H4 PPY
12 HA
HAB 11S
55 HAH
25 HAK
HAK 11M
25 HAM
25 HAN
HAN 1S
HAR 15H
15 HAS
45 HAW
5 HAY
77 HB
14 HC
HEA 1Y
85 HH
20 HL
77 HM
HOG 5
HOL 11E
HOL 11S
123 HR
123 HS
HUL 5E
25 HW
80 J
J3 MMA
J4 MES
J4 VED
16 JA
5 JAH
80 JAN
JAS 9
80 JB
17 JC
14 JCB
1 JCL
444 JD
1 JDD
321 JEF
JEM 7
70 JEN
88 JF
JFF 1
1 JFW
55 JJ
1 JJJ
1 JJP
33 JK
25 JL
2 JLH
1 JLV
111 JM
15 JN
14 JO
JOB 3
44 JP
JPS 999
123 JR
2 JRC
2 JRS
80 JS
11 JSA
1 JSF
80 JT
15 JW
1 JWG
1 JWJ
1 JWW
60 KA
2 KAN
KAR 1R
KAS 10
5 KAT
1 KCC
31 KE
KEL 10W
45 KEY
1 KGP
KHA 111D
30 KJ
KOS 5
68 KS
11 KSB
17 KT
33 L
L4 UGH
LAK 1S
5 LAM
10 LAS
18 LB
30 LC
1 LCO
65 LD
1 LDM
105 LEE
1 LEF
4 LES
51 LF
30 LH
51 LKS
99 LL
10 LLY
33 LM
51 LO
80 LOS
13 LS
71 LT
LUC 11E
LUK 1C
14 LUV
5 LW
51 LX
LYD 11A
70 M
M15 TRY
M0 RRY
44 MA
2 MAH
MAJ 111D
MAR 11N
MAS 11
123 MB
13 MC
1 MCE
15 MD
1 MDF
MOS 5
4 MER
14 MF
25 MG
MGM 5
81 MH
28 MJ
1 MJA
1 MJG
3 MJS
22 MK
600 MO
4 MOS
1 MPN
MPS 5
66 MR
1 MRG
23 MS
MSL 2
MUK 10W
1 MWM
70 N
N15 BET
110 NA
NAB 1M
NAS 11
15 NB
2 NC
51 ND
81 NE
10 NF
50 NGS
18 NH
7 NK
99 NL
14 NM
13 NP
24 NS
30 NT
OAS 1S
25 ON
ONE 11L
60 OO
5 OV
18 OX
1 OXO
18 P
P1 XSY
P3 TER
P4 STA
P4 ULA
800 PA
99 PAM
PAS 7
222 PAT
16 PB
22 PC
5 PCH
2 PCP
35 PD
1 PDC
PEP 10E
1 PGD
1 PHC
1 PHF
1 PJJ
1 PJL
55 PM
1 PMR
18 PN
1 PNC
POP 1X
14 PR
PRA 1L
PRA 1S
51 PS
PUB 1T
PUF 1T
PUL 11N
PUN 1R
20 PW
1 PWK
1 PWW
R1 OCO
R1 CHD
R1 NGS
R1 SHA
R11 CKY
R11 LEY
16 RA
RAJ 1T
RAS 111
RAV 1A
24 RAY
98 RB
80 RC
15 RD
50 RE
REN 1A
12 RF
123 RG
57 RJ
RJC 4
2 RJK
45 RJM
15 RK
78 RL
19 RM
4 RMS
16 RN
50 RO
55 ROB
51 ROG
41 RON
ROS 11E
ROW 1A
70 ROY
18 RP
51 RR
70 RS
25 RT
50 S
19 SA
20 SAB
24 SAM
SAS 1E
SAT 15H
4 SAW
55 SB
SCA 1TY
90 SD
1 SDO
51 SE
SEB 1E
5 SEM
1 SFW
13 SG
27 SH
SHA 1SM
19 SJ
1 SJP
1 SJT
6 SJW
500 SK
321 SKY
20 SL
911 SM
SME 1E
33 SN
SOM 1D
321 SOB
SOT 1E
14 SP
1 SPO
10 SR
44 SS
84 ST
SUD 111N
ST SUE
SUN 1L
SUL 1M
SUN 1R
13 SW
1 SYL
99 T
25 TA
TAR 111K
TAT 1A
44 TB
66 TC
1 TDC
TET 10W
12 TG
2 TH
17 TK
18 TL
78 TM
70 TOM
TOW 1E
111 TP
1 TPT
14 TR
44 TS
18 TT
55 TW
50 UL
50 UND
33 V
5 VB
9 VE
10 VEO
10 VH
60 VM
6 VW
13 W
3 WAB
WAT 40
WAT 50N
50 WD
14 WG
333 WOW
65 WP
100 WS
15 X
1 XEX
4 XL
1 XBB
6 XS
111 XX
8 YB

This is the full list of numbers on offer. The lots will not be offered in this order. Please see catalogue for details. E & OE.

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A catalogue admits 2 people to the auction.

Catalogue orders by post regrettably cannot be accepted after 4.00pm on 12th December 1997.

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C280 Eleg Auto, 96N, Azurite, mushroom lthr, alloys, cruise, 10 stack cd, 20K, FMBSH, one owner, £25,950. 01603 427678, 0802 268568.P/ex.

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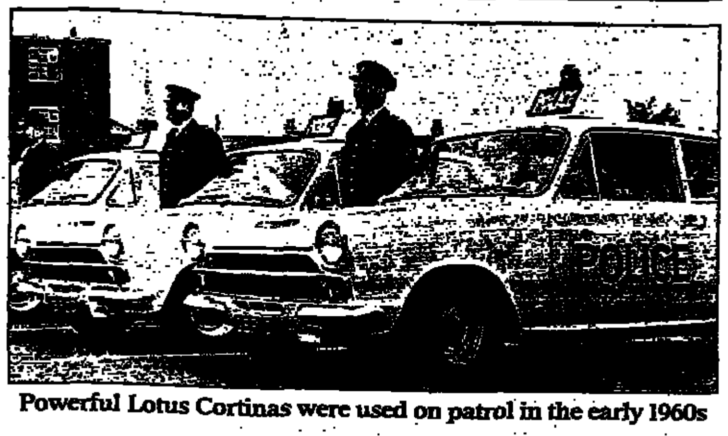
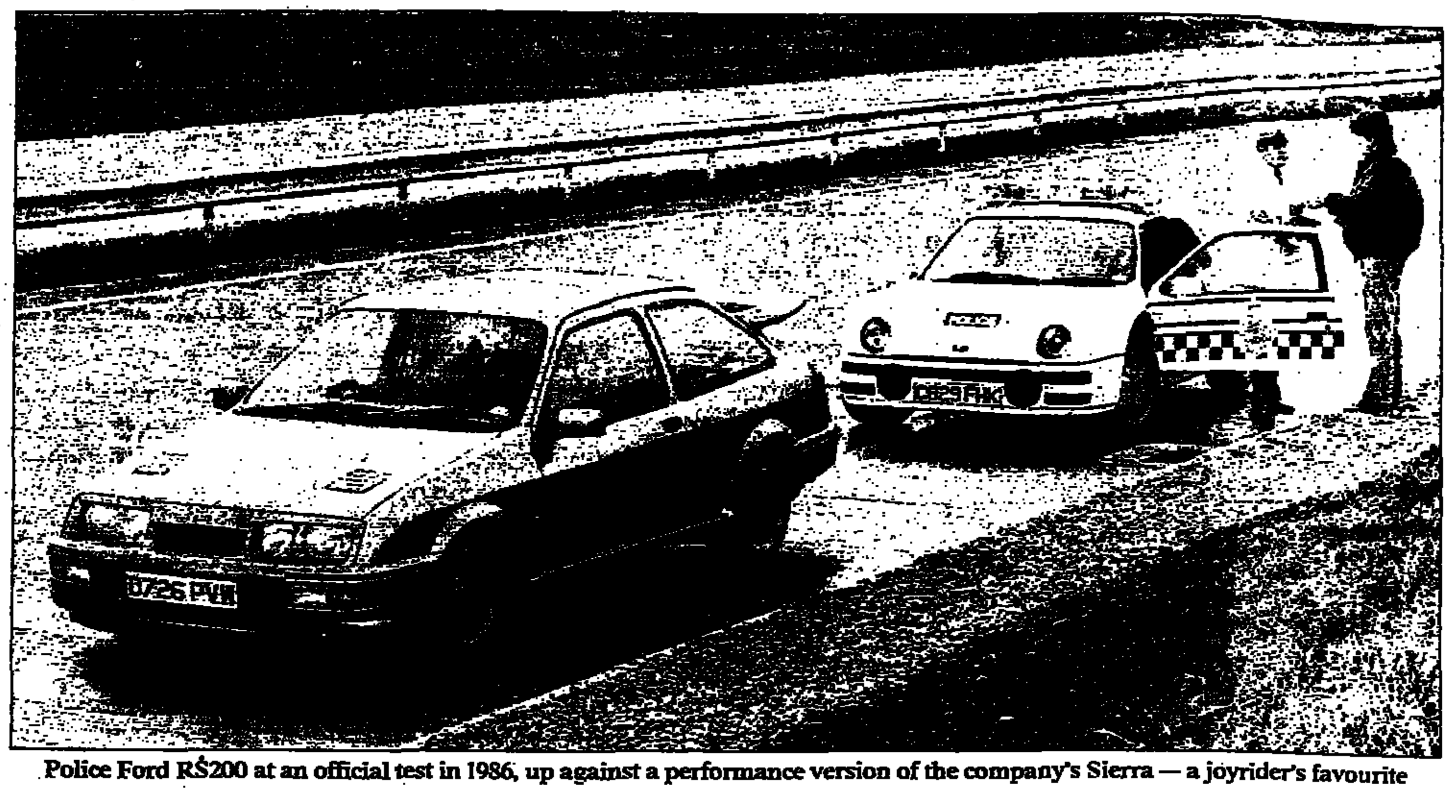
You will believe a panda can fly

PCs don't plod in cars built by Ford's new performance unit, says **Stuart Birch**



Powerful Lotus Cortinas were used on patrol in the early 1960s



Police Ford RS200 at an official test in 1986, up against a performance version of the company's Sierra — a joyrider's favourite

The orange Ford RS2000 accelerated hard, exhaust snarling, dust swirling in its wake, the driver clicking through the gears. Its brake lights flashed briefly and then it was through the corner, speed building towards 110mph.

Two hundred yards behind, PC Bryan Evans in a V6 ford Mondeo Estate, reached for the blue light controls, switched on the siren and floored the throttle.

He had a tough task, and he knew it; for the RS he was chasing was a Formula Two rally car in the skilled hands of 1996 British Rally champion Gwyndaf Evans (no relation), Ford works rally driver. And Gwyndaf does not like being caught — by anyone.

But PC Evans, of Greater Manchester Police Accident Investigation Unit, proved no slouch when it came to co-ordinating throttle, steering and brakes in a neat piece of wheeled artistry called the high-speed pursuit.

To the accompaniment of the wailing, whooping siren and the howl of tyres, the 170bhp Mondeo put up a fine performance although, not surprisingly, the long arm of the law was not quite long enough to feel Evans's collar in the 260bhp RS.

In fact, Evans the Rally and Evans the Law were both behaving very responsibly on a track in Essex, demonstrating just how well — and safely — a road traffic police car handles when it has to tackle the toughest opposition.

It must do that despite carrying up to 180kg of equipment in the back. But contrary to popular belief, police car engines are not generally tuned to provide extra performance: the cost and potential damage to reliability are against that.

It is essential, however, that the cars' chassis are modified to counter the effects of that extra weight on a police vehicle's handling characteristics.

So the focus is on improving its ability to cope with corners and with some of the more punishing problems likely to be met on a high-speed chase, including, ironically, sleeping policemen. And it is Ford's motorsport experience that is allowing this to be done.

Ford supplies about 40 per cent of the police cars on UK roads, from the panda-car Fiesta to the 24-valve Scorpio used to patrol our motorways.

British police forces run about 27,000 vehicles, including 22,000 vans and cars, which are replaced at a rate of 5-6,000 a year. Police use of cars has expanded rapidly since the Second World War. Before then, cars were little used, as most forces relied on motorcycles to control traffic.

Ford has a long history of supplying police vehicles, and has just opened a "one-stop shop", offering fully prepared "blue-light vehicles" ready for service. At the high-security Ministry of Defence Police headquarters at Wethersfield, Essex — former American Air Force base — Ford Special Vehicle Preparations (SVP) can prepare up to 2,500 cars and vans a year in a dedicated new facility.

Ford's 170bhp six-cylinder Mondeo has toughened suspension

Stiffening and strengthening the suspension is essential, and the work carried out on the V6 police Mondeo means that despite its 180kg load, its handling and roadholding can equal or better that of a standard car.

In 1995, Humberside Constabulary's Escort Cosworth was the first police car modified in conjunction with Ford Motorsport. It was given an underbody skidplate — like a giant sump-guard — and had modified suspension and rally wheels.

That motorsport experience is now being put to far more extensive use on the SVP cars and vans. Gordon Spooner, who plays a key role in engineering Ford's rally cars, is a joint managing director of SVP. But John Berry, his co-managing director, stresses: "We are not in the bolt-on goodie market; we ensure that our vehicles operate as an integrated system."

Typically, the cost of uprating suspension and brakes and equipping, a police car with roof light bar, siren and radio, is around £1,600. A challenge that SVP faces is that there is little commonality of equipment between the UK's 56 police forces.

Each has its preferred way of doing things, so there is no such thing as a national "standard" police vehicle, and even when SVP supplies cars, a constabulary will often put the finishing touches to it when it is delivered: "However, about 25 per cent of the vehicles processed by us are fully equipped," says Berry.

Extensive testing is carried out at Wethersfield on the track that the Evans duo used to good effect. It features highly demanding corners plus the use of a runway for high-speed lane changing and flat-out testing. Durability is vital: police patrol cars often have a 150,000-mile life.

SVP also equips armed response vehicles, which are equipped with bullet-proofing and special cases to carry weapons, including very serious stuff such as the Heckler and Koch machine pistol.

Unmarked police cars are also prepared at Wethersfield. For those, blue lights may be built into the door mirrors or tucked away beneath the bumpers. But using a flashing blue light on a cable, attached magnetically to the roof — a favourite in Hollywood police films — is not popular with British police: it tends to slide gently backwards when pursuit speeds get to the 100mph mark.

But there is one piece of driving much beloved of Hollywood (Steve McQueen's Mustang in *Bullitt* really started it all) that does concentrate minds at SVP: the "flying" police car.

If it hits a humpback bridge or sleeping policeman at speed, the downforces that the chassis is subjected to on landing can be enormous. So SVP applies special strengthening — again based on lessons learnt from rallying — that will ensure the suspension does not appear through the bonnet. John Berry phrases it carefully: "We design and build vehicles to meet the most arduous of conditions."

But I think what he really means to say is: "Eat your hearts out, *Dukes of Hazzard*."

IN BRIEF

Britain's toughest test for classics

RALLYING: Britain's longest, toughest event for classic cars starts this morning when more than 100 vehicles leave Land's End for John o'Groat's on the fifth LE JOG.

They will drive across Dartmoor, through the Welsh borders, over the Pennines and via Edinburgh to reach the finish at dawn on Tuesday. Among those taking part will be Phil Surtees in his 1942 Willys Jeep, which took first place in the recent Peking to Paris Challenge.
Details: 01886 833 505

Light flight relief

FLYING: Aero-enthusiasts will be looking on the lighter side of life this weekend.

The world of kites, model aircraft, balloons, microlites, hang-gliders and homebuilt planes is the focus of the International Air Sports Exhibition at Telford Exhibition Centre, near Shrewsbury today and tomorrow.

The show, which is organised by the British Microlite Aircraft Association and the British Hang-gliding and Parascending Association, will also give visitors a chance to book flying holidays.

MoT testers belted

SAFETY: A damaged car seatbelt was passed by all 50 MoT testing stations chosen at random by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents in a recent survey. Most of them also failed to spot other seatbelt faults. RoSPA is calling for extra training for MoT testers as a result.

The survey was carried out with a car that had a cut in a front seatbelt near its anchorage point, a rear belt that would not retract fully and a centre rear belt partly hidden under the seat.

Not one station spotted the front damage. Eight per cent failed the car because of the non-retracting belt and another 22 per cent pointed it out and issued advice. only 46 per cent recovered the centre belt to inspect it.

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97P Chimaera 4.0 Halcyon Atlantis, Magnolia/Blue. 9k £31,000
96P Chimaera 4.0 Rosso Red, Black, PAS. 16k £29,500
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95N Chimaera 4.0HC Rosso Red, Magnolia. 13k £28,500
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	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Protected Funds				
UK Safeguard	139.88	149.05	+ 2.88	
Do NAV to Dec 19	136.83	136.83		
UK Equity Safeguard	109.52	117.12	+ 1.61	2.47
Do NAV to Sep 19	106.93	106.93		
Cash	954.79	959.56	+ 1.00	5.75
UK Growth Funds				
UK Equity Gen	368.10	391.30	+16.90	1.72
UK Small Cos	79.32	84.82†	+ 1.12	0.49
FTSE 250 Index	97.89	104.87	+ 1.70	2.11
Geared UK Index	2303.65	2431.09	+156.00	5.75
Income Funds				
Corp Bd	81.12	83.80	+ 0.32	
Monthly Inc	41.79	44.69†	+ 0.88	6.57
International Funds				
American Gen	292.00	308.00†	+ 7.30	
American Smal	246.82	263.92	+ 0.08	
JG US Index	2337.37	2462.77	+83.00	4.00
European Gen	329.10	348.00	+14.80	
European Smal	141.05	150.84	+ 7.20	
Japan Gen	104.70	111.00†	- 0.70	
Asia Pacific	69.61	74.21†	+ 2.30	
Pacific Smal	113.63	121.52	+ 5.75	
Greater China	216.57	231.63	+20.46	
Latin America	109.36	116.95	+ 6.07	
Int Growth	167.74	179.39	+ 6.73	
Balanced Exempt	151.30	156.80		
Global Strategy	48.11	51.42	+ 0.99	

AXA EQUITY & LAW UNIT TST MGRS
01203 553 231

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
General Acc	840.60	894.20	+38.50	2.54
General Inc	685.20	728.90	+31.50	2.54
UK Growth Acc	581.20	618.20	+26.00	2.42
UK Growth Inc	367.40	390.80	+16.50	2.42
Higher Inc Acc #	1069.00	1137.00	+49.00	4.47
Higher Inc Inc #	548.80	583.80	+25.00	4.47
Gilts/Fxd Int Acc	229.90	242.90	+ 1.00	5.68
Gilts/Fxd Int Inc	95.77	101.10	+ 0.40	5.68
Nth America	426.10	453.20	+14.10	
Europe	446.10	474.50	+21.10	0.59
Brit Excell	115.50	122.80	+ 4.70	2.27
Int Fedrals Acc	145.30	154.50	+ 4.80	4.50
Int Fedrals Inc	93.19	99.13	+ 3.09	4.50
Global Opps	110.10	117.10	+ 3.30	0.30
Balanced Acc	72.96	77.51	+ 2.42	2.38
Balanced Inc	66.66	70.91	+ 2.22	2.38
Japan Acc	33.78	35.93	- 0.45	
Pac Basin Acc	296.10	315.00	+19.40	1.53

ABBEY UNIT TST MGRS
0345 717 373

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Gilts & Fixed Int	140.70	149.30†	- 1.30	6.11
High Inc Equity	219.40	234.70	+ 7.90	4.29
Worldwide Bond	268.20	284.40†	+ 1.50	3.49
American Growth	531.10	566.20	+16.30	0.30
Asian Pacific	235.80	252.70	+ 9.18	0.55
Assets & Earnings	338.50	362.00†	+10.00	2.58
Euro Capital Acc	240.50	257.20	+ 9.70	0.78
Extra Inc	42.56	45.20†	+ 0.04	9.19
General	313.00	331.00	+ 8.30	2.96
Global Opps	75.96	80.81	+ 2.22	0.40
Japan	74.85	80.05	- 0.71	
Managed Inc	51.67	54.97†	- 0.93	3.09
Mastertrust	183.10	195.80	+ 4.90	1.13
US Emerging Cos	214.40	229.30	+ 4.70	
Ethical	90.04	95.79	- 0.63	1.91
International	138.60	148.50	+ 4.10	0.59
Dividend & Growth	81.13	86.31	- 2.69	4.04
Global Gwth & Inc	77.66	82.92	0.21	2.44
Latin America	90.37	85.61	+ 4.14	0.78
Capital Reserve	152.70	152.70		4.58

ABBEY NATIONAL UNIT TRUST MGRS LTD
0141 275 8500

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
NW UK Growth	112.20	119.40	+ 5.60	1.94
Equity Income #	156.90	166.90	+ 6.60	3.82
Fixed Income #	300.60	319.30	+ 3.60	4.65
Smaller Cos	101.60	108.00	+ 1.00	2.06
International	129.80	137.00†	+ 5.10	2.19

ABERDEEN UNIT TRUST MGRS LTD
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	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
American	79.80	82.96	+ 2.26	
Emerging Mkts	61.15	64.74	+ 0.72	
European	168.62	175.79	+ 6.68	
Extra Income #	57.95	61.00†	+ 1.03	5.13
Far East Emg Cos	81.87	85.96	- 0.75	0.87
Fixed Interest #	26.01	29.12†	+ 0.28	7.98
[illegible]	180.24	189.22	+ 1.42	9.93
Japan	141.47	146.99		2.27
Latin American	69.87	73.47	+ 2.56	
Pacific	58.00	60.89	+ 0.93	0.31
Property	89.52	93.17	+ 1.86	1.18
UK Emerging Cos	70.55	76.22	- 0.95	0.90
UK Growth	69.70	73.29	+ 2.94	1.25
New World Fund #	89.06	92.64†	+ 1.34	2.54

CDF CHARITY FUNDS
0171 588 1815

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Investment Inc	884.00	907.61	+12.45	
Investment Acc	4296.73	4361.57	+64.64	
Fixed Int Inc	133.66	134.20	- 0.47	
Fixed Int Acc	365.53	366.59	+ 0.90	

CITY FINANCIAL UT MGRS LTD
0171 556 8800

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Beckman Intl	95.70	100.66	- 0.28	
Beck Bio-Tech	39.30	42.38†	+ 0.07	
Acorn Ethical Tst	212.68	226.26†	+ 2.44	
City Fin Assets	85.08	89.34†	- 0.07	
City Fin Intl	85.27	90.71†	+ 2.16	
Fdwns Hse Cap	355.10	377.77	- 0.50	
Buckley Wrld Gth	133.94	147.23	+ 1.53	
Shum Utilities	83.54	85.25†	+ 3.34	

CITY OF LONDON UNIT TST MGRS LTD
0171 711 0771 Adctrs: 01277 227 300

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Emerging Markets	51.22	54.35	+ 1.84	

CLERICAL MEDICAL UT MGRS LTD
0345 772 233

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
American Gwth	98.76	105.06	+ 1.95	
Dragon Growth	49.57	52.88	+ 2.77	
Equity High Inc	113.76	120.38†	+ 3.18	
-do- Accum	171.71	181.70	+ 5.75	
Extra Income Inc	28.64	30.15	+ 0.09	
Extra Income Acc	33.29	35.05	+ 0.11	
European Gwth	81.70	86.46	+ 3.34	
Evergreen	35.41	37.87	+ 1.32	
General Equity	132.71	140.06	+ 4.66	
Japan Growth	32.74	34.83	+ 0.79	
Pedigree Gwth	80.16	84.82	+ 3.17	
Ped Sm Cos Inc	41.37	43.78†	+ 0.43	
-do- Accum	44.56	47.14	- 0.47	
Retirement Inc #	33.86	36.02	+ 0.82	
Special Sits	54.54	58.97	+ 1.63	
UK & Overseas	66.80	70.78	+ 2.04	

COLONIAL UNIT TRUSTS (UK) LTD
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	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Balanced	81.39	84.78	+ 2.38	
Capital	100.84	104.78	+ 3.63	
High Income	55.88	58.20†	- 0.26	
Top 50	73.15	76.19	+ 3.81	

COMMERCIAL UNION TRUST MGRS LTD
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	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Income Funds				
Equity Inc	225.63	235.12	+ 5.88	
Long Gilt	49.94	51.99	- 0.10	
Monthly Inc Plus	57.89	60.31	+ 0.19	
Preference Share	55.89	58.21	+ 0.69	
Balanced Funds				
High Yield	162.70	169.50	+ 2.17	
Managed Fund	84.57	88.10	+ 2.54	
UK Growth Funds				
Smaller Cos	51.95	54.02	+ 0.35	
-do- Accum	62.01	64.60	- 0.42	
UK & General	123.68	127.85	+ 7.00	
-do- Accum	165.75	172.67	+ 9.38	
UK Growth	243.44	253.61	+10.06	
International Growth Funds				
Europe Growth	265.88	276.99	+11.14	
Far Eastern Gwth	98.90	102.93	+ 3.20	
Global Bond	71.48	74.47	+ 0.34	
Japan Growth	86.57	90.19	- 0.37	
North Amer Gwth	207.19	215.92	+ 9.76	
Oriental Growth	60.62	63.15	+ 3.56	
Worldwide Growth	80.47	83.83	+ 2.94	
OTHER CU TRUSTS (NOT PPT FUNDS)				
Deposit Fund	92.31	92.31	+ 0.10	
Homemaker Fund	100.55	105.90	+ 3.78	
[illegible] Fund	174.26	185.38	+ 6.78	

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European Growth	91.86	97.54	+ 3.91	
Recovery	202.60	215.70	- 0.58	

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Fellowship Tst	120.50	129.10	- 2.00	
Income #	334.90	356.30†	+13.60	
-do- Accum #	936.00	995.10	-37.70	
Smaller Cos	233.80	248.70	+ 1.70	
-do- Accum	292.30	310.80	+ 2.20	

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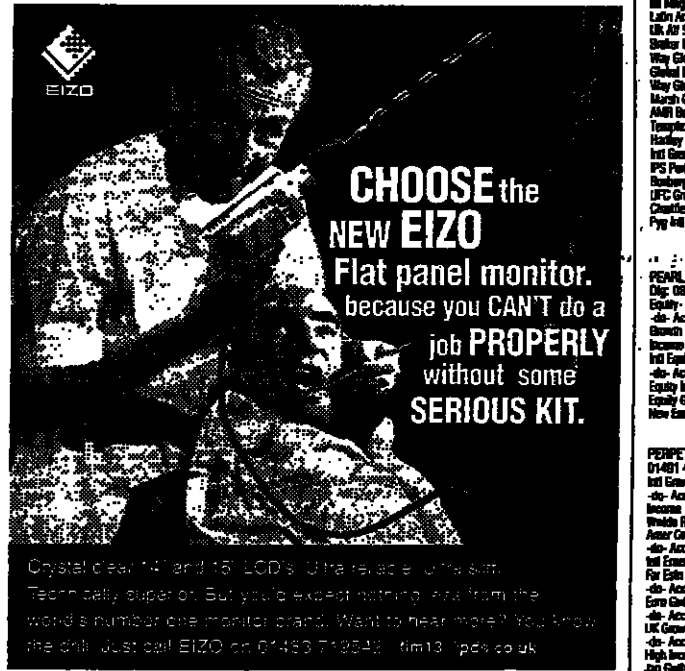
Equity Dist @	733.30	733.30	+28.50	2.00
-do- Accum @	1560.00	1560.00	+62.00	2.08
Equity Income #	124.70	124.70	+ 3.49	4.38
UK Tactical Allocn @	85.08	85.08	+ 4.41	5.05
European @	179.40	179.40	+ 7.50	0.22
Far Eastern @	167.10	167.10	+ 5.00	..
Fixed Interest @	58.88	58.88	+ 0.28	7.30
Gilt @	97.58	97.58†	+ 0.43	6.02
Global Growth @	83.98	83.98	+ 2.44	0.18
Intl Bond @	48.58	48.58	+ 0.32	5.02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Japanese @	53.40	53.40†	- 0.03	
North American @	287.40	287.40	+ 7.10	
Pacific Growth @	83.02	83.02	+ 4.08	0.83
Pacific Index @	33.88	33.88†	+ 1.93	2.95
UK Index @	95.56	95.56†	+ 4.10	2.54
UK Recovery @	136.70	136.70†	+ 4.98	1.51
UK Smaller Cos @	179.90	179.90	+ 1.80	1.10
US Index @	113.20	113.20	+ 3.68	0.74
European Index @	114.40	114.40	+ 5.00	1.10
Japan Index @	26.06	28.06	- 0.47	..
Worldwide @	111.10	111.10†	+ 3.70	1.04

WHITTINGDALE UNIT TST MGMT LTD
0171 623 2444

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Short Dtd Gilt	130.80	132.00	+ 0.10	.
US Govt Bd (US$)	0.8142	0.8226	+ 0.08	..
Gilt Income	52.61	53.44	+ 0.14	6.30
Gilt Growth	86.73	88.09	+ 0.96	...
Sterling Bond	51.10	51.95†	+ 0.20	6.20

WOOLWICH UNIT TRUST MGRS LTD
0181 298 4000

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Intl Mgd	64.35	68.95	+ 1.90	1.74
UK Stockmarket	126.40	134.50	+ 5.00	2.08
Corporate Bd Inc	50.63	50.75	+ 0.10	5.98
Do Accum	54.98	55.10	+ 0.10	5.98

Source: FT Information

* Yield expressed as CAR (Compound Annual Return); † Ex dividend, ‡ Middle price, ... No significant data, # Periodic Charge deducted from capital; @ Exit Charge

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هكذا من الأصل

SOME YOU WIN 57

How did small investors fare during the year?

WEEKEND MONEY

RUSSIAN AROUND 58

Can just two men analyse 27 states for a new fund?

The high cost of making the grade

Clare Stewart looks at the problems and extra costs involved in buying, restoring and living in an historic or listed property

Dream homes come in many varieties — a cottage with roses round the door, a new showhouse, or a near roofless ruin. For one recent buyer, the dream was a Tudor gatehouse. The buyer was a lady in Buenos Aires, who snapped it up after having seen it advertised on the Website of Pavilions of Splendour, a London agency specialising in listed houses.

If you are drawn to older houses, lured by their cosy thatched appeal or elegant Georgian windows, you need to be prepared for both the extra costs and extra work that may be incurred, even if the property is in good order. A structural survey is vital and for older houses, a more detailed report by a specialist surveyor is particularly important.

"Never rely simply on a mortgage valuation," said Stephen Boniface, of Boniface Associates, an expert on historic properties. It may be that the mortgage company is happy with a basic report, but the buyer is likely to be storing up problems for the future, if they go ahead without an expert view on the property's weaknesses.

Such a report may be more expensive than a survey on a modern house, but if carried out by someone who, said Mr Boniface, is up to date with modern conservation practices, might mean the buyer does not spend money on costly or even inappropriate and potentially damaging repairs.

Key areas of concern in older houses are damp and timber problems. A survey also has to look at where more modern repairs may have been made to the original fabric, but which may conflict with these materials leading to problems, said David Goodridge, a London specialist surveyor.

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) will provide a list of specialist surveyors accredited by its Buildings Conservation Group, while organisations such as the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) are also able to provide information. If the house needs renovation, a good survey provides the first stage in assessing costs, which the mortgage company will need to know.

Building societies will look at each property on its merits, and few rule out lending on buildings over a certain age. However, many lenders are not keen on older and listed houses, and may steer clear of those built in unusual materials or in some cases those that are timber-framed and timber-clad.

Some building societies may be prepared to lend only a small amount, requiring the buyer to find a greater part of the purchase price from other resources. In addition some lenders will only consider a loan once much of required renovation work has been carried out.

Specialist lenders such as the Ecology Building Society do have broader lending criteria and, said Paul Ellis, chief executive, may consider loans on near-derelict buildings, where there is a viable opportunity to bring the house back into use. The Ecology Building Society does stipulate the use of appropriate materials, where possible reclaimed, in the restoration, and also expects certain levels of insulation and energy efficiency.

Buying a listed building imposes conditions which may prove costly and onerous and it can be a criminal offence to carry out unauthorised work on a listed building. A large number of houses built up to 1840, said English Heritage, which "survive in anything like their original condition" are likely to be listed. Most will be classified as Grade II listed which means work on the house must be approved by the local council's conservation officer.

If the property is classified as Grade II* or Grade I, any work on the house must be approved by English Heritage, which also offers advice to property owners. For information on architects, engineers and conservation specialists, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings is another good source. "Buying professional advice may appear expensive but always works out as the right decision," said Gwyn Headley, managing director of Pavilions of Splendour.

Insurance is another area where it is vital to get the right cover. Many of the larger insurance companies will take on a 16th-century cottage or Queen Anne mansion, but because it is out of the run of their usual business, you could pay a big premium. "The biggest problem with owning a listed building is that of being underinsured," said Ian Berry, manager of the listed properties division of Lambert Fenchurch, a specialist insurance broker.

The cost of rebuilding a listed building several hundred years old is very difficult to estimate accurately. Many general insurance companies may use modern rebuilding rates in assessing costs which could result in inadequate cover, and leave homeowners facing crippling bills in the event of a fire or other serious damage.

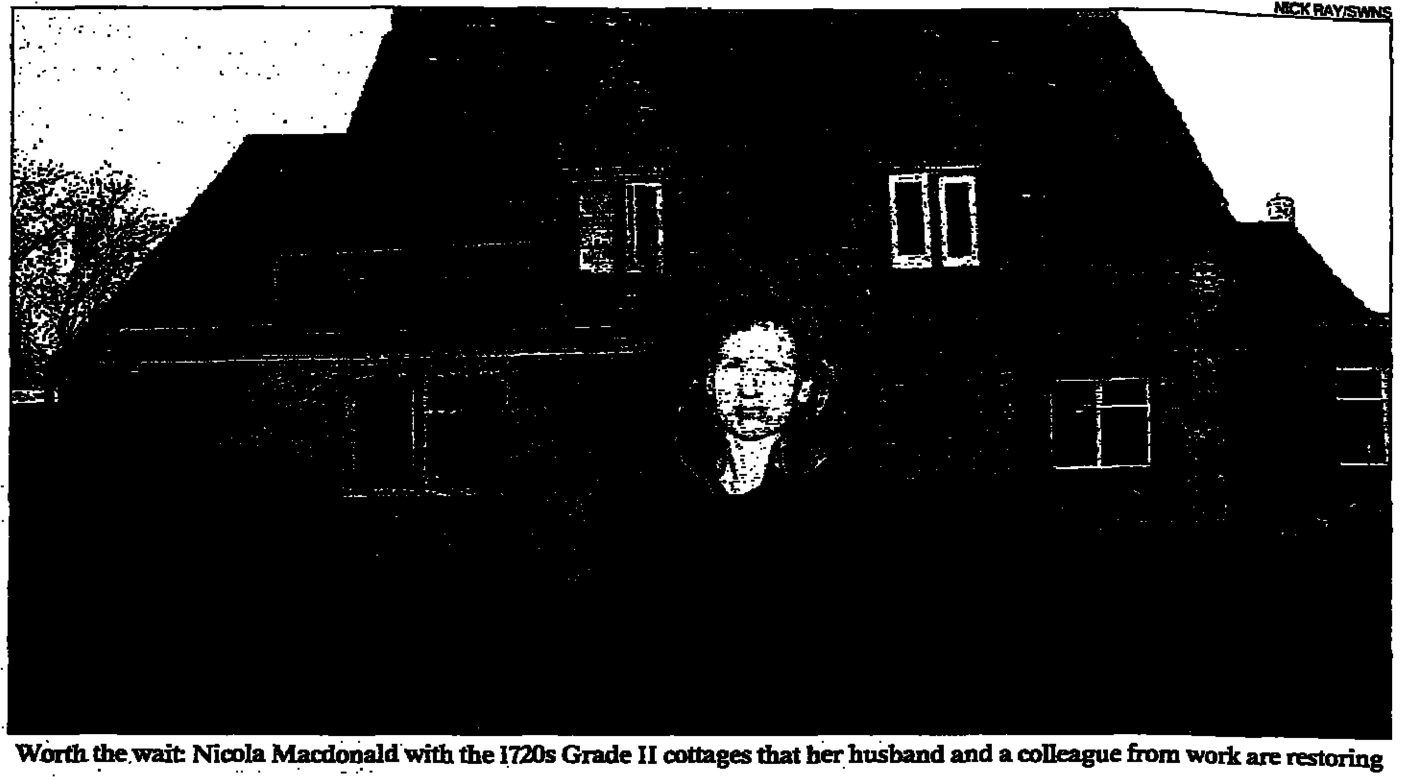
Lambert Fenchurch seeks to cover this problem by guaranteeing that it will meet the difference if the property is underinsured. While insuring a listed building may prove more costly than a modern house, there are some advantages with older properties. "Timber-framed properties are often without foundation so are not affected by subsidence. Also stone-built houses are very strong and resist ground movement," Mr Berry said.

If you own a property with a thatched roof, it is again worth using a specialist, rather than a general insurer. Because of fire risks, thatched houses have to have their wiring checked and approved every six years, keep chimneys swept and have firefighting equipment to hand. Insurance will be 20 to 40 per cent higher for thatched houses than for slate or tiled-roofed homes, said Mr Berry, who also manages Thatched Owners Insurance, part of Lambert Fenchurch.

In spite of the extra costs that may be involved, househunters should not be put off buildings with thatched roofs. "Thatch has had a bad press because of the fire risks when the roof is very new," said John Husband, senior partner of Humberts, the estate agent. "But it is worth remembering that it is a very good insulator, so that the house will be cool in summer, warm in winter. It is also pretty obvious from looking at thatch whether or not it needs replacing." For brokers specialising in older houses and thatched buildings, contact the British Insurance and Investment Brokers Association (BIIBA).

CONTACTS

- **RICS** 0171-222 7000
- **BIIBA** 0171-623 9043
- **SPAB** 0171-377 1644
- **Ecology Building Society:** 01535 635933
- **Stephen Boniface Associates:** 0181-554 7914
- **David Goodridge** 0171-730 0701
- **Pavilions of Splendour** 0181-348 1234
- **Lambert Fenchurch** 0181-506 6211
- **English Heritage** 0171-973 3434
- **Humberts** 01273 478828



NICK RAY/SWNS

Worth the wait: Nicola Macdonald with the 1720s Grade II cottages that her husband and a colleague from work are restoring

Pooled resources provided the keys

Professional knowledge of old buildings and their conservation helped to guide two families through the complexities of buying a listed building (Clare Stewart writes). Gordon Macdonald and Stephen Lawrence are both project managers at Carpenter Oak and Woodland in Chippenham, Wiltshire, a company which specialises in the conservation of timber-framed buildings. "We were both looking for properties of a similar nature and price but almost everything we found in that price range was a wreck that needed a lot of time and work to make habitable," said Mr Macdonald.

They decided to pool their resources and were then able to look at a wider choice of properties. Among these was a pair of stone and timber cottages at Biddestone, close to where they worked. The cottages, bought for £110,000, are about 270 years old and Grade II listed. They were originally built for labourers at a nearby stone quarry.

A detailed survey was carried out, which, said Mr Macdonald, was essential. Finding a surveyor who understood older buildings and their conservation was also important.

The two couples went to the Ecology Building Society for a mortgage because of its interest in the sympathetic conservation of buildings. "We realised that there would be problems with damp and insulation and felt strongly that chemical damp-proof treatments were not necessarily the best option."

All the work in the cottages had to be approved by the local listed buildings inspector. Mr Macdonald added: "It helped that we presented a cohesive plan for the two cottages together and the inspector was delighted that we were demolishing two horrendous 1960s additions."

Both families expect to invest more than £20,000 in renovation work and are confident it will be money well spent. "We would not do it unless we were certain we could recover the investment," said Mr Macdonald.

Mr Macdonald, his wife, Nicola, and five-year-old daughter, Megan, moved into one cottage in August, though more work has to be done, while Mr Lawrence and his partner, Stephanie Waddington, expect to move into theirs after Christmas.

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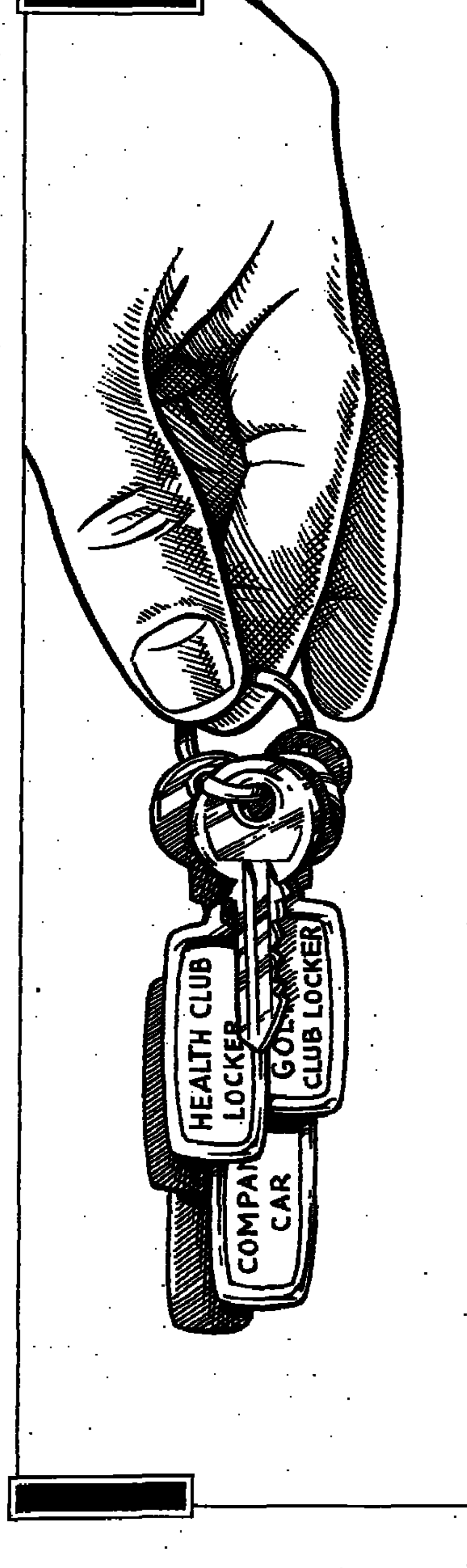

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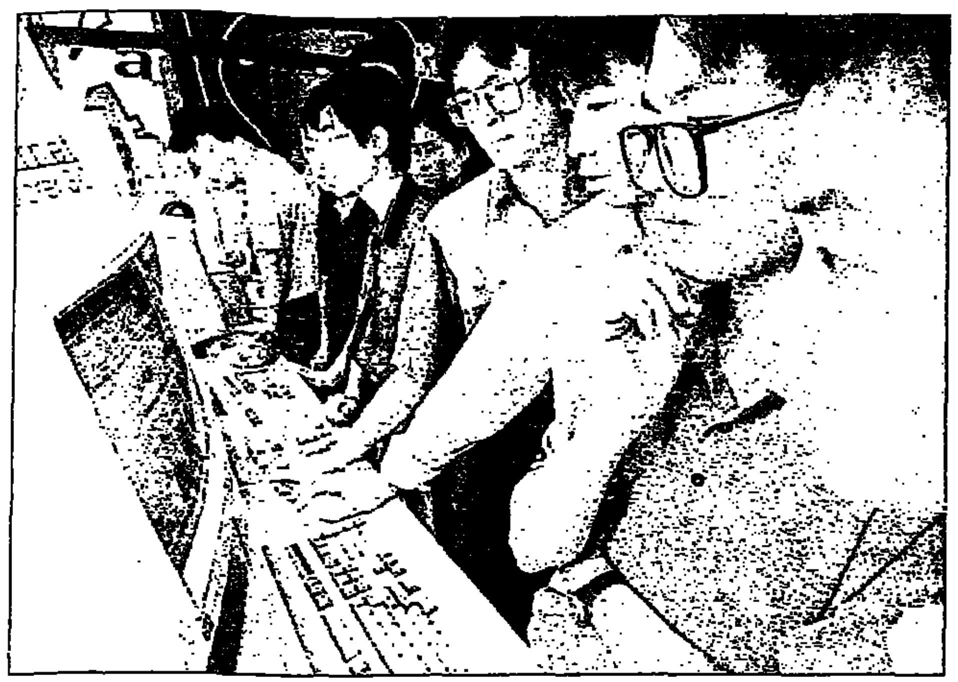
Clare Stewart on using the Internet to meet your financial needs

Caught on the Web


The Internet is growing in popularity as a tool to provide much financial information

Search the Web. Download data. Surf the Net. It is hard to miss the various exhortations to tap into the Internet and find out the answer to everything you *ever wanted to know*.

Recent Weekend Money articles on share prices on the Internet have brought requests from readers who are seeking to know more about other financial information on the Web and how to find it.

Whether you want to get to grips with the judge's opinion in the Louise Woodward case, flick through Nasa's snaps of Mars or find out if you have won the National Lottery, the *Internet is the place to go.*

In just the same way you can tap into a vast range of personal finance information, from the latest share prices to *good deals on pet insurance.*

Forget about cutting out please-send-me-more-information coupons from the back of magazines, and waiting for a response to come through the letterbox. The Internet is increasingly used as a marketing tool by companies to promote their products and services.

This week we take a brief look at what it all means and how to work the World Wide Web of information.

Q What exactly is the Internet?

A In simple terms it is a network that links information sources to provide a global library. Ignoring the sometimes baffling technical speak, you will perhaps find it easier to think of using the Internet just as you would any library, searching through different books or information sites to find the details you require. Unlike a conventional library, however, the Internet provides access to information that is being constantly updated. *The Internet, as a vast* communications network, encompasses electronic mail or e-mail, allowing users to send messages worldwide.

Q How do I get onto the Internet?

A A personal computer, a modem and an Internet service provider are the three essentials. There are numerous companies that provide the online connection to the Internet, with the largest including BT Internet, Pipex and Compuserve. Costs will vary and some personal com*puters include a free Internet* trial period thrown in with the purchase. One connection option through BT Internet for example costs £11.75 a month *on top of which you* pay according to the time you spend online, with calls charged at local rates.

***Q How do you find your* way around?**

A Once you are connected up, the library of information is accessible. To pinpoint more precisely what you need to know, it is a matter of using so-called search engines such as Yahoo!, which are directories of available sites, from which you can choose by subject category.

If you are looking for general information about a topic you can either type in a generic phrase, such as home insurance or fixed mortgages which will bring up a daunting list of possible sites. Each will give details of the products offered by a particular company, and how to find out *more information.*

Alternatively if you know precisely what site you want, you type in its specific address. For example if you wanted to know what Direct Line had to offer, it can be found at www.directline.co.uk.

Q Where is a good place to start?

A To avoid being deluged with information a *useful place to start is a* general personal finance directory or Money World (www.moneyworld.co.uk), an electronic magazine of *information.*

As with all Web sites it will link into other sites such as those of banks, building societies and other financial services groups.

Q Can I find out about share prices?

A It is possible to follow share price movements in markets across the world, not just in London. You will have to pay extra if you want to see live or real-time share prices. ESI (www.esi.co.uk), one provider for example, charges subscribers £20 a month, or for a more limited selection of ten shares, the charge is £5 a month. Alternatively prices supplied with a 20-minute delay are usually free, *if you have registered* with the provider.

Topic (www.market-i.co.uk), the data service that supplies City dealing rooms *with shares prices, also sup*plies the Internet, though again to see real time prices there is a charge. At present for London Stock Exchange prices it is £15 a month.

Q What about buying and selling shares?

A It is possible to deal in shares once you have registered with the relevant broker. Groups such as ESI *have links with brokers: alter*natively you can go direct to companies such as Sharelink, the largest execution-only broker in the UK. (www.share*link.com)*

Dealing this way can be a cheaper option, says Sharelink, which charges according to the amount of *trading carried out. For exam*ple, there is a flat fee of £15 per trade, regardless of its size, while if you want to buy and sell frequently, there is a Frequent Traders Club which allows unlimited trading. To join this there is an an annual fee of £60 and a quarterly administration charge of £6.

Q What about other direct services?

A Websites are becoming more interactive although the majority are used by financial services groups to provide information on products and services.

This week Interactive Investor International (III), an investment information service on the Internet, announced *further expansion of its ser*vices by teaming up with Dialog, the online information group.

Dialog is to provide some of its services free to investors using the III site which will mean they have access to news headlines and summaries from a wide range of sources.

For help with using the Net *there is a UK Internet Users Group on 0171-608 0608.*

Save the new Ford Edsel

PERSONAL INVESTOR

GRAHAM SEARJEANT

Prepare for the worst. This week's proposals *for individual* savings accounts confirm the suspicion that new Labour still thinks savers are good but investors are bad. If Britain's richest minister still believes that anyone with £50,000 savings is "very well off", then any venture to encourage the bulk of families to provide for themselves looks doomed. As soon as OK *savers build up a modest sum,* they become non-OK investors.

Private investors and regular savers must expect the thinking behind Isas to govern other reforms: the stakeholder pension and its ramifications, the review of capital gains tax and changes to inheritance tax. A compulsory low-level funded pension might well give the pretext to stop contributions above that level qualifying for income tax relief.

The annual gains tax allowance might be abolished and left to self-assessment. If long-term gains are to be taxed less, *pension funds could be hit again and* property gain an edge over shares.

On Geoffrey Robinson's definition, the threshold for inheritance tax could allow only for modest savings and an average *£65,000 house, perhaps* £100,000 in all. New Labour's roots are still so shallow, however, that a £500,000 house in Islington might just as easily be accommodated as a norm *for Middle England.*

The Isa proposals exemplify this mental muddle. They bring together three strands: Labour's desire to persuade bands of low-income earners with virtually no financial savings to put a little aside; firm pre-election promises to keep popular Tessas and Peps; and the dire warnings issued by the Inland Revenue when presented with any new scheme offering tax relief.

Not surprisingly, the product coming off the drawing board is the Ford Edsel of savings. The Isa is a vehicle designed with elements of what everyone asked for, but in consequence is costly to produce and will appeal to few. Labour's own ideas are confused. The new guard rightly sees that people who want to save but have little to spare will prefer a simple, flexible scheme that lets them take out cash if needed and not have to worry about tax. For them, long-term savings are best built by short-term *saving, made easier by transferring odd* sums into savings using a card at the local cash machine or supermarket.

The folksy wing, including unions, Co-ops and Frank Field, wants to revive *low-level insurance schemes* from before the welfare state, "offered by friendly societies and other insurers which have traditionally attracted funds from smaller savers". These have virtues, but cost is not one of them. Nor is flexibility. Their value depends on regular saving, year after year.

These two objectives do not easily sit in the same scheme. Once a scaled-down annual Pep is added, Isa becomes complex, costly and illogical. Established private investors find little welcome, not least from a £50,000 lifetime ceiling. Yet a shopper is encouraged to pop £50 into Japanese share warrants along with the weekly groceries.

The Inland Revenue also went ballistic. It fears that interest on scores of billions in building society deposits will become permanently tax-free. So the "cash component" is limited to £1,000 a year, except for transferring Tessa holders. Detailed rules are threatened for the £1,000-a-year "life insurance component" to make sure it is not a cash substitute. Most bizarrely, cash would be allowed in the "stocks *and shares component*" only if no interest is paid on it, the return being pocketed by the lucky manager. Yet £50,000 could be invested in bonds, on which interest would be cash-free.

Can the Isa be saved? Only if a Government with a huge majority really wants to listen. Ministers must first stand up to the Inland Revenue. Time and again, *Revenue caution made* damp squibs of Tory initiatives such as profit-related pay, share-save schemes and Peps. To make them work, tax incentives were then progressively made more generous, sometimes going over the top to compensate. To have a chance, Isas should start with the maximum relief or highest risk of tax loss that ministers are *prepared to concede later.*

Having one portmanteau scheme makes Isas complex, not simple. Few providers would offer an Isa *with the full range of options.* And they would be aimed only at those transferring £50,000 at once or saving the maximum £5,000 a year.

On cost grounds, small savers will usually be offered Isas with only one component. So why bother to cram them all into one straitjacket? If the scheme is to attract those looking to better themselves, the £50,000 lifetime limit must go, whatever the restrictions on annual saving or Pep transfers. Pep holders paying standard rate tax might not want to transfer to Isas, depending on what comes of the gains tax review. By then, the Chancellor might know whether he wants to boost savings as a whole to help the economy, or just encourage those near the poverty line to help to cut welfare spending. Isas would sacrifice the former for a hope of the latter.

Hassle factor kicks into play as Pep investor switches funds

Concerns about stock market stability have spurred many investors to consider switching from shares to gilts and bonds. But as one *Times* reader has discovered, changing investments held in a personal equity plan can be a complicated and frustrating business.

John Bailey, a retired civil *servant, has used self-select* Peps from the Bank of Scotland to protect his share holdings from tax since 1990. Some of his shares, including Shell, have performed very well, so last month he decided to take profits on holdings worth about £15,000.

"My wife and I decided to switch some of these equities to corporate bonds to provide greater stability as well as improved income," he says. "We consulted our Pep-provider, who said there was no problem, so we gave instructions for the sale of some equities."

However, when Mr Bailey tried to reinvest his money, he found it difficult to obtain information about buying corporate bonds. The Bank of Scotland does not have a stockbroking arm, so its self-select Pep is run on an execution-only basis. This means the investor is entirely responsible for drawing together information and making investment decisions.

He considered buying units in a corporate bond fund, but encountered two problems. If he held the units within his existing Bank of Scotland Peps, he would have to pay two lots of fees — one to the Bank for administering the Pep, and a second to the fund manager for setting up units and running the corporate bond fund. This would wipe out much of the benefits of investing in the fund.

He considered transferring one or two of his Peps to a Pep manager who offered a corporate bond Pep. Such Peps typically levy just initial and annual charges on the underlying fund. Fees for administering the Pep are usually waived.

A corporate bond fund may also reduce the risk of loss for the investor by spreading his money over a wider range of bonds than he would normally be able to afford.

Ian Millward, manager of investment marketing with Chase de Vere Investments, the independent financial adviser in Bath, recommends two corporate bond Peps. The Virgin Direct Income Pep has a running yield of 7.11 *per cent* (no initial charge, 0.7 per cent annual), while the Legal & General Corporate Bond Pep has a running yield of 7.4 per *cent (no initial, 0.5 per cent* annual charge).

However, Mr Bailey then discovered the Bank of Scotland had rolled all his self-select Peps into one entity. Under Revenue rules, investors may not transfer part of a Pep's investments, leaving the rest in the old Pep. As the bank could no longer discriminate between the Peps, he either had to transfer all his money, or none.

Mr Millward says many investors may find similar problems when transferring money. "If you set up more *than one Pep* with the same Pep provider, it will roll your Peps into one. The computer systems can no longer tell which investments were made *in different tax years,*" he says.

"The problem would be solved if the Inland Revenue would allow investors to transfer a portion of their entire Pep holdings, regardless of whether it comprises all the investments held in a single Pep."

Investors who want to transfer individual Peps should invest with a different Pep provider each year.

Matthew Orr, managing partner of Killik & Co, the *broker, recommends two euro*bonds. The BT bond runs until 2003, with a running yield of 7.05 per cent and redemption yield of 7.125 per cent (price 101p per unit). *Its coupon is paid on* September 15 every year. The British Oxygen Corporation bond complements this, paying its coupon on February 18. It runs until 2004, with a running yield of 6.9 per cent and a redemption yield of 6.75 per cent (price 98p per unit).

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When the slopes beckon

The first flurry of snow on our doorsteps this week has already fuelled the fantasies of Britain's 320,000 skiers.

This year, swapping the slush on the M25 for a life on the piste will come cheaper than last season. Because of the strength of the pound, not only will there be more to spend on ski passes but the extra cash will stretch to a few more rounds of *Glühwein* (Lizanne Rose and Susan Emmett write).

Those heading for French resorts, the most popular destination says Thomas Cook, the travel company, will get more than 4,846 francs for £500, an extra £66.68 for your money.

Austrian schillings are even better value, yielding £70 more than last year, and if you are off to Switzerland, that's an extra £49 in your pocket. A six-day ski pass will cost you between £60 and £106. But if you are more interested in the aprés-ski it may be worth getting a half-day ski pass valid from midday.

Skiing at 40 mph down a black-run may be perilous, but not taking out ski insurance is much more hazardous. Because flinging yourself down a mountain is a little more dangerous than lying on a beach, ski insurance is about a third more expensive than standard holiday cover.

Expect to pay about £25 a week if you are heading for Europe and about £60 for two weeks in the US, although prices vary. However, not all policies cover off-piste skiing unless you are accompanied by a local guide or qualified ski instructor.

An ugly sister at first glance

COMMENT

ANNE ASHWORTH

Personal Finance Editor

Just in time for the pantomime season, the Treasury has produced its own piece of slapstick, unintended but nevertheless not to be missed.

The launch of the individual savings account (Isa), intended to ensure that we all enjoy prosperous Christmases in the next millennium, had various elements of farce: A multi-millionaire minister dismissed anyone with savings of more than £50,000 as a fat cat. Those who merely aspired to retire with this kind of money were as unamused as those in the Croesus category.

There followed confusion over official figures. The numbers who would be hit by the £50,000 Isa maximum investment limit began at 750,000 and ended at 350,000. However, there is no guarantee that this last total is accurate, merely conveniently smaller.

Like any Whitehall farce, the piece had its traditional features. It *has* become customary for Treasury ministers to provide, whenever possible, new business opportunities for the life insurance industry. Not wishing to break with the past, new Labour has allowed £1,000 of the £5,000 annual Isa limit to be placed in insurance policies.

In one wing of the Treasury, the Economic Secretary threatens to remove the livelihoods of insurance chief executives who have been tardy in paying compensation to victims of pension mis-selling.

In another, the Paymaster General passes over to these unrepentant fellows still more responsibility for our financial futures.

The Isa has been launched with the admirable aim of encouraging those on low incomes to save. Yet the Government is happy to give a slice of the action to the same industry that urged thousands of poorly paid employees to leave Serps, the additional state pension scheme for personal pensions.

In a scandal that has yet to be fully investigated, the tiny contributions of these unfortunate individuals have been eaten away by administration charges.

The structure of the new Isa, part cash, part insurance, part shares and unit trusts, has seemingly been designed to suit life insurers and their systems.

Ministers claim that the involvement of the supermarket banks will ensure a high level of competition, and thus drive down charges.

There is also some talk of fresh regulation to ensure that all Isa providers display commissions and fees in a straightforward way. However, successive attempts to ensure charge disclosure have failed because some insurers have the utmost expertise in concealment.

This weekend, the Isa has few supporters. But the unenthusiastic reception for its debut means that it will surely be remodelled during the consultation period.

Meanwhile, better deals for small savers are already arriving. The Bristol & West pre-Isa account will be paying 7.25 per cent on balances of just £10.

Insurance covered a winter break

Two members of Weekend Money reader Dave Tupman's ski party suffered injury during their two-week holiday in Andorra last January. Fortunately, Mr Tupman, a design engineer from Guildford, Surrey, was covered with fully comprehensive ski insurance — his total claim came to £3,000 (Lizanne Rose writes).

"The incident happened on the very last afternoon of my holiday. We'd had a great day snowboarding and were heading up to the top of the mountain for a final descent. But the ground was icy and as I was getting off the chairlift, my snowboard slipped from under me and I fell backwards."

Mr Tupman broke both bones in his left forearm in three places.

"I knew immediately that it was broken — I heard the crack — and after five minutes it was extremely painful. The difficulty was that because it occurred at the top of the mountain, I had to get down again before I could be treated. I had either the option of a sledge or chairlift and chose the latter".

Because Mr Tupman was covered, any treatment would be charged to the insurance company and not to him.

ADRIAN SHERRATT

Painful souvenir: Dave Tupman with the X-ray plates from the hospital in Andorra

"After X-rays at the Medicentre, it was clear. I would need hospital treatment and an ambulance was called. I was detained overnight and had a 4½-hour operation the next day with two surgeons plus an anaesthetist. When it came to settling the bill, I contacted the insurance company and they sorted everything out by liaising with the hospital. All I had to pay was £75 excess."

Not only does insurance cover you for hospital treatment, but most companies will also pay for return flights. Mr Tupman had missed his flight because of the operation but his policy covered him and a new plane ticket was arranged for both him and a friend to return home. An extra night in an hotel was also reimbursed for his friend.

"I have taken out ski insurance on all my trips but never had to make a claim before. The actual cost of the insurance is quite cheap — I chose Columbus because it only specialises in insurance and was also cheaper than a travel agent. I was impressed that the claim went straight through. Despite now having 22 screws in my arm, I haven't been put off. I do plan to go snowboarding soon and wouldn't hesitate to take out their insurance again."

ADRIAN SHERRATT

Ouch: the X-ray confirmed that his left forearm was broken

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It has been announced that the tax treatment of PEPs will change from 6th April 1999

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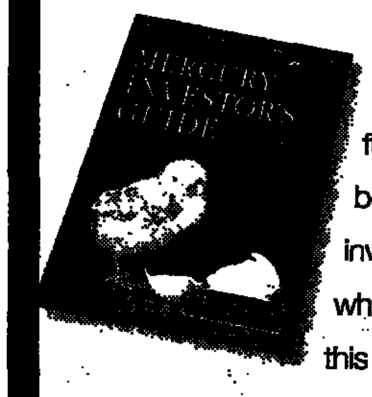

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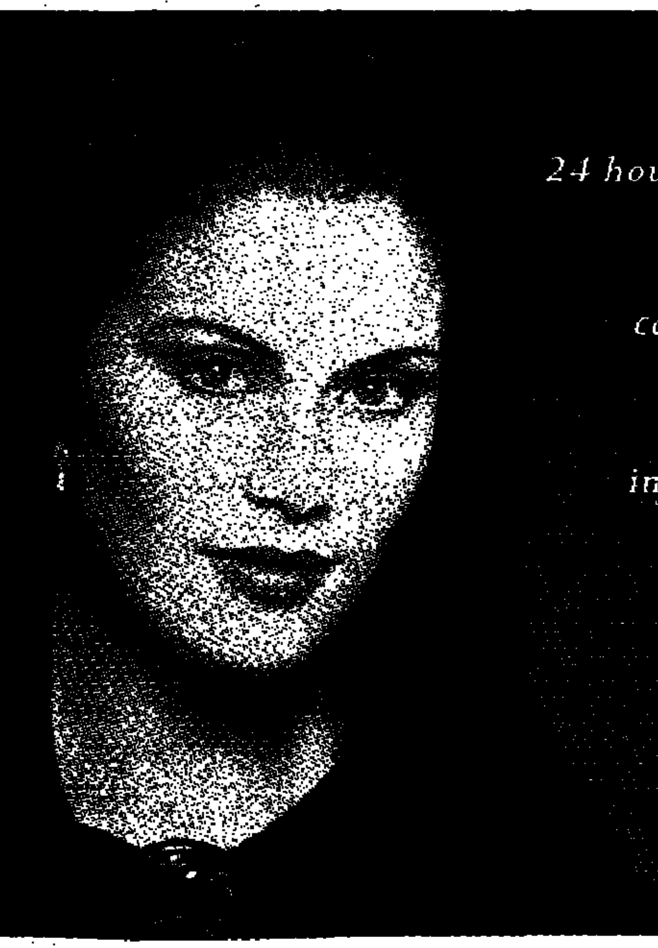

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John Givens continues our series for those intending to become self-employed

In search of the greatest asset

It might not happen from day one. but if you are going to make a success of building a small enterprise into a successful business the chances are that at some stage you will need to take on staff.

Although this may at first appear to be a straightforward task, recruiting and holding on to good people is far from easy. as many stressed personnel managers will tell you, and if it is your first experience of employing staff. knowing how to go about it and what it is likely to cost can make life easier, if not cheaper.

PERSONNEL

■ Word of mouth. Undoubtedly the easiest and cheapest way *to recruit people* is by employing someone you know or you have heard about by word of mouth. This will take a lot of the hassle, expense and risk out of recruiting and at best it might cost you a few pints down the local pub or a dinner at a nice restaurant.

However, care should be taken when employing somebody *who is a friend* because. although it may seem like a fun and cosy arrangement at the outset, it can be hard to manage friendships in a stressful business environment and acrimony could *soon set in.*

■ The jobcentre. The jobcentre is a government-run organisation which provides a free employment service for companies and jobseekers.

If you are looking for general staff such as administration or manual workers it will be an ideal place to go. The staff at the local branch will liaise with you to help you to find the person you need by setting up interviews.

■ Colleges and universities. If you are looking for someone with specific qualifications who need not necessarily have work experience. there is a good chance that colleges and universities will advertise your vacancy internally free of charge.

■ Advertising in the press. If none of the cost-free options for finding the right person is *open to you, then it is time to* put your hand in your pocket.

Advertising in newspapers and magazines can be a very successful way of identifying a number of quality people who could do the job for you.

However, it can be very expensive. If you decide to advertise in your local newspaper you can expect to pay a rate based on each single column centimetre of space you buy.

What you will pay depends *on the catchment area* and circulation of the newspaper and the bigger it is, the more it will cost you.

The *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*, for example, has a circulation of 114,000 and charges £25.55 for each single column centimetre, which means that if you placed an advertisement for a job measuring 10cm deep across two columns of the page, your bank account would end up £511 lighter.

The *Evening Standard* in London, which boasts a circulation of almost 450,000, has a rate of £68 per single column centimetre, which means the same sized advert would cost £1,360.

Press advertising is not guaranteed to work and if you do not find the person you were hoping for from an ad, there is no refund.

■ Recruitment agencies. Many people are put off from using agencies because on the face of it they are very expensive.

They charge, on average, around 15 per cent of starting salary as a fee, which would mean a bill of £2,400 for a person earning £16,000 a year and a sizeable £3,750 for an *employee starting on £25,000.*

However, the benefit is that most agencies work on the basis that they charge you nothing at all unless you do take someone from them.

This means you can see as many candidates as you like but if you do not recruit any of them there is no cost to your business. You might also be able to employ somebody on a temporary basis, paying an hourly rate, to see if they are suitable before taking them on *permanently*. You will also have to pay an agency fee for a temporary placement.

■ Headhunting. Headhunters target individuals who have a reputation for being a leader in your industry but are under contract with another company. They are carefully approached and asked if they would be interested in working for you, although your company's identity is not initially revealed; so, if the person is offended by the proposition, your business should not be affected. However, if you use a headhunter expect to part with between 25 and 40 per cent of what you would expect to pay as first-year salary.

☐ *Next week: Your responsibilities as an employer*

Temp won permanent role

Kay Quance, left, with new recruit Anahid Blannin at Exor's offices in Bristol

Exor Corporation, a computer software house, was happy to pay a £1,500 recruitment agency fee last December after temporary worker Anahid Blannin impressed so much that the company decided to offer her a permanent job.

US-born Anahid worked with the Bristol-based company, which set up three years ago designing highways management programs, as a temp for a month before the personnel manager, Kay Quance, decided she was just what was needed to run its administration department.

Kay contacted Lucy Bristow Appointments, the recruitment agency which placed Anahid in the temporary position, and negotiated the fee with Gilly Robertson, a senior consultant, before offering Anahid the position of administration manager. Kay says it was worth paying the recruitment costs for somebody so good.

"Right from the start we were very impressed with Anahid's ability and attitude, so we decided to take her on full-time. Paying £1,500 might seem like a lot, but it would have cost more if we had advertised and had to spend time interviewing."

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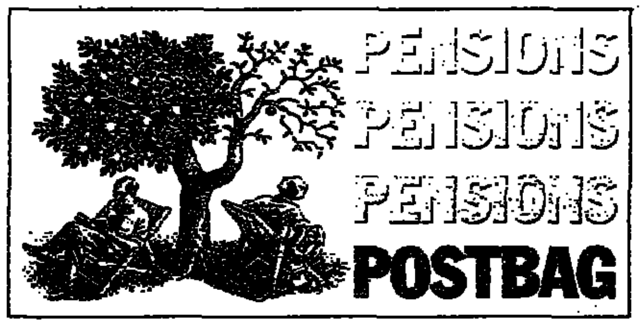
Treatment of employees' partners is under scrutiny



The unequal treatment of widowers by some pension schemes, with regard to spouses' past contributions, and by the state earnings related scheme (Serps), has been highlighted recently in Pensions Postbag. Now Weekend Money reader Peter Nuthall, of Brighton, has pointed out that other groups who also face discrimination by company pension schemes are the common-law husbands or wives of members and same sex partners of members.

Mr Nuthall asks how much longer companies will be able to drag their feet in withholding pensions from these groups, bearing in mind the ruling in the European Court against South West Trains for not making available staff travel benefits to partners in same-sex relationships.

Pensions Postbag replies: While most occupational pension schemes now provide a spouse's pension when a member dies, the latest annual survey of the National Association of Pension Funds (NAPF) shows that only 4 per cent of private company pension schemes and 2 per cent of schemes for public sector employees provide pensions for common-law partners "as a matter of course".

However, 69 per cent of private schemes said they may do so "at trustees' discretion", though in the public sector only 13 per cent of schemes give trustees such discretion. Most public schemes stated that they would not provide pensions for unmarried partners "in any circumstances".

Asked in the NAPF survey whether their schemes have provisions for same-sex relationships, nearly a quarter of private schemes said they did, but in the public sector less than one in ten schemes did so. Even so, among those which did, in 66 per cent of private schemes the benefits were at the discretion of the trustees.

Clearly, few pension schemes as yet have rules to cover pensions involving either common-law or same-sex relationships. The rules refer only to spouses. According to Roger Key, occupational pension schemes expert at the actuaries Watson Wyatt, the South West Trains case doesn't affect things.

He explains: "What would have an effect for partners in same-sex relationships would be if a case were brought claiming that rules which restrict benefits to married partners were discriminatory because these couples are not able to marry even if they want to."

Currently, most common-law and same-sex partners have to rely on the goodwill of the trustees as to whether they inherit any benefits. They may qualify for a dependant's pension. The way trustees exercise their discretion in this matter varies from board to board, says Mr Key. "Different boards of trustees have different attitudes," he said. "They will normally look for some kind of financial dependence by the partner on the deceased member. For example, if they have taken out a very large mortgage together which one could not have afforded alone. Trustees may also take into account the length of the relationship."

Where life insurance is provided by a pension scheme prior to retirement, it is more common for members to be able to nominate who they want to receive that benefit, which is normally a lump sum of between three and four times annual salary. Many pension scheme members believe they should have the same freedom to decide who should inherit their pension benefits after their death.

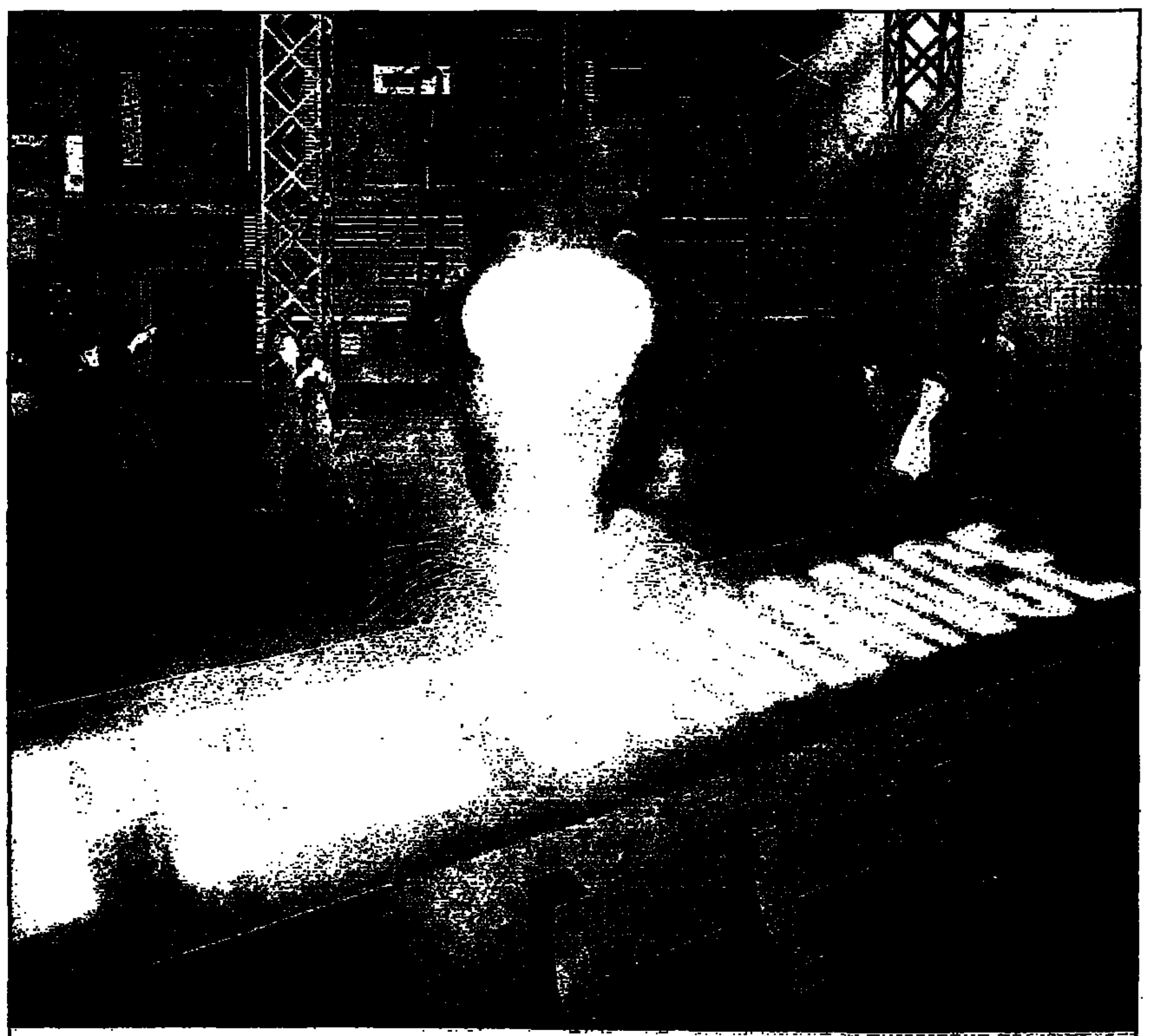
However, Mr Key points out: "What few people realise is that group pension schemes are a form of insurance as well as savings vehicles. The original idea behind them was that everyone should pay something in and they would each then get something out related to their specific needs. Thus, there are some people who get paid a pension for only a few years after their retirement while others who live to 100 receive a great deal more. If everyone wants to get out what they paid in, it would mean that many would receive a lot less than they do today."

With a personal pension, people have more control prior to retirement. If death occurs, the value of the fund will normally be paid into an investor's estate or can be put in trust for specified beneficiaries, so the money can be left to whoever the policyholder wants.

When an annuity is purchased, the situation is more difficult. By law, a pension can only continue to be paid after death to a spouse or to someone who is financially dependent on the annuitant. What's more, not all insurance companies will issue joint life annuities to same-sex partners, though by shopping around, says Peter Quinton, of the Annuity Bureau, it is possible to find one.

In theory, members of company pension schemes could also take a transfer value and buy such an annuity if they wanted to be sure of providing for a dependent partner. However, Mr Quinton says: "Transferring out of a final-salary scheme at retirement is not usually advisable. The member himself will often lose out heavily; for example, he would receive no discretionary pension increases. It would be better to approach the trustees and ask them to consider providing a pension for a partner."

HELEN PRIDHAM



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Ann Iverson was shown the door at Laura Ashley in November

Winners and losers in shares

Clare Stewart on how small investors fared in the past year. Which stocks did they buy, sell or tuck away for tomorrow?

This year has been an eventful one for investors, as a number of key events have set the pace in the stock market. For much of the year it has followed a bullish upward track although there was a lull just before the general election. Overall, however, the market confounded the pundits who expected it to run out of steam, and it went on to test record levels above 5,330 by early October.

In the summer came the rush of building society demutualisations accompanied by a flood of free shares and the addition of thousands more shareholders to boost the ranks of small investors. More recently, the impact of economic problems in the Far East has rattled equity markets worldwide and prompted sharp falls in prices. Analysing where in 1997 small investors have spent their money or sold up, highlights some interesting trends and changes in investors' habits.

Q What are the most popular shares?

A Building societies turned quoted companies feature large in assorted lists of popular shares. For example, **Halifax** tops the list of most bought shares for both Charles Schwab (formerly Sharelink) and The Share Centre, the execution-only broker. Halifax, which floated in June, and began trading at 774½p, also has the largest shareholder base, with about five million shareholders, double that of **Abbey National**, the second largest.

HSBC, **Cable & Wireless**, and **Standard Chartered** saw their share prices dive in line with Far Eastern markets but then were boosted as sharp-eyed investors took advantage of the cheaper stock. Other blue chip stocks in demand have included **Marks & Spencer**, **Shell** and **BT** while more recently NatWest Stockbrokers reported demand for groups such as **Unilever**, **Granada** and **Reckitt & Colman**.

Among more speculative plays, **Dragon Oil** stands out as a clear favourite. The exploration company saw its shares surge ahead in the spring on the hopes of strong drilling reports, but continued to find support later and, in August, topped the buy list at NatWest Stockbrokers. At the beginning of the year its shares were about 30p, before more than tripling in value to peak at 108½p.

Q Which shares have investors sold the most?

A **Halifax** is also top, or near the top of the rankings for shares sold in greatest quantity, according to several brokers. In part, this is explained by the influence of Halifax with its enormous shareholder base, with investors looking to take profits on their free shares before any further big falls in the market. Similarly, **Alliance & Leicester**, and **Norwich Union** number among Charles Schwab's top five shares sold, while in recent months deals through NatWest Stockbrokers show investors moving out of other groups such as **Woolwich** and **Abbey National**.

BT, as it regroups after the abortive MCI deal, has a foot in the camps of both sellers and buyers, as does **National Power**. Investors looking to take profits have sold while those that favour utilities as an attractive safe haven in uncertain times have piled in. **British Energy** was second on the sale list for customers of The Share Centre, which says that investors sold up before having to pay the second instalment on their part-paid shares.

Q Which sectors have small investors been watching?

A Banking, pharmaceuticals and integrated oil groups led the stock market on its strong upwards run, and groups such as **Glaxo Wellcome**, **Lloyds TSB** and **Shell** were snapped up by investors large and small. Retailers have also been sought-after, with **Marks & Spencer** one of the most heavily bought, while the sector overall was boosted during the summer on talk of windfall spending by recipients of free building society shares.

Samples of popular shares by Charles Schwab on a quarter by quarter basis also highlight demand for **Safeway** and **Sainsbury** among food retailers, while **Laura Ashley**, the struggling fashion group, has also found support. This, says Guy Knight, communications director, perhaps reflects both buying earlier in the year on hopes of an improvement in the group's performance, as well as bargain hunting more recently, as bad news and the boardroom shakeout, when Ann Iverson left, knocked shares lower.

Barclays Stockbrokers points to considerable investor interest in leisure stocks, including quoted football groups such as **Manchester United**, **Chelsea** and **West Bromwich Albion**. This interest, says Barclays, spilt over to buying of shares in groups such as **Whitbread**, and sports retailers such as **JJB Sports**.

Unsurprisingly, utilities and privatisation stocks are important to many small investors, given that they may have had their first taste of share ownership via one of the big public issues. Among those sold most heavily during the year have been **BG** and **Centrica**, while **Railtrack** more recently has been sold as investors decided to realise their gains against the uncertain market background.

Q What about smaller companies and more speculative shares?

A Apart from Dragon Oil, interest has focused on a number of oil and gas exploration groups and mining companies, with groups such as **Fortune Oil and Monument Oil** attracting attention on hopes of significant new finds. Similarly biotechnology and pharmaceutical groups are often snapped up in anticipation of a major new product or research breakthrough. **Shield Diagnostics Group**, for example, started the year at about 130p and by March had hit a peak of 805p.

Q Does the share trading pattern reflect any other changes?

A Investor reaction to events through the year has proved revealing, says Matthew Orr of Killick, the private client broker. The usual ratio of buying to selling of 60-40, switched to show more sellers during the August market wobbles. But after sharper falls in October, there was a marked turnround to 75-25 as buyers moved in.

"It was the polar opposite of what happened in 1987 when there was more of a herd instinct and panic selling," said Mr Orr. Now, he says, the short-term punter has been replaced by longer-term investors looking for buying opportunities.

There has also been a continuing rise in the number of personal equity plans held by investors, both single-company and general Peps. This reflected both the amount of money individuals had to invest and a better understanding of their tax advantages. While their future was uncertain, their popularity may have reflected a rush by investors to buy while stocks lasted.

Let the taxman boost your Christmas giving

The number of people giving to charity has fallen over the past 20 years and the young are less likely to give than the old, according to a recent report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies. But with Christmas only a few weeks away, even the tight-fisted may feel compelled to make a donation.

With a little planning, you can make gifts more tax-efficient and increase the amount that charities receive. About £4 billion is given to charity in individual donations each year. Yet as only one in ten is tax-effective, charities lose millions of pounds. Oxfam, one of Britain's largest charities, is expecting about £1.5 million in the next year from new regular donors "recruited" this Christmas. About 40 per cent of the charity's regular donors join at this time of year and because their donations will be tax-efficient, Oxfam will get an extra £330,000 from tax relief, £130,000 more than it expects to raise in one-off donations this Christmas.

Mike Wade, fundraising manager at Oxfam, is keen to encourage people to make year-round tax-efficient donations: "Rather than giving a one-off donation, if people give in this way, it can raise the value dramatically." If you pay 23 per cent income tax or more, there are three tax-efficient ways to donate money: gift aid, a deed of covenant, and give-as-you-earn.

Vicki Pulman, of the Charities Aid Foundation, said that although charities are now aware of more tax-efficient ways of raising money, the public is still uncertain. "A lot of people don't understand the schemes and have misconceptions, thinking that the conditions are more restrictive than they are," she said.

The idea behind the schemes is that charities get more money by reclaiming the basic rate of tax from Inland Revenue at no extra cost to you. You make a payment to the charity net of basic-rate tax and the charity reclaims the tax. A basic-rate taxpayer giving £250 must have earned £324.68 before tax, so the charity would get £250 plus £74.68 of tax from the Revenue.

There is little point making these types of donation if you do not pay tax. Higher-rate taxpayers, however, have the added advantage of getting full tax relief on gifts. Those paying tax at 40 per cent can reclaim the marginal rate of 17 per cent. So if you are a higher-rate taxpayer and make a donation of £1,000, the charity will get £1,298.70 and you get £220.78 back. Of all the tax-efficient schemes, Gift Aid, which was set up in 1991, is the most recent and the best for tax-efficient one-off donations. But the minimum donation is £250 cash, which is regarded as being paid net of basic-rate tax. There is no maximum limit to this type of donation.

> The idea is that charities get more money by reclaiming the basic rate of tax at no cost to you

Deeds of covenant, which have their roots in the Church giving tradition, are the oldest and most widely used tax-efficient donation. They are legal agreements to donate part of your income each year and must last four or more years.

There are two ways to give through a deed of covenant. Under the most common, known as a "net of tax" covenant, you sign a covenant agreeing to pay the charity a certain amount after deduction of tax every year. So if you are a basic-rate taxpayer and agree to pay £77 each year, the charity will reclaim £23 and receive £100. The other, known as gross convenant, is not as widespread but means that the charity always gets the same amount regardless of changes in the tax rates. As with Gift Aid, higher-rate taxpayers can reclaim the additional higher-rate tax relief through the tax office.

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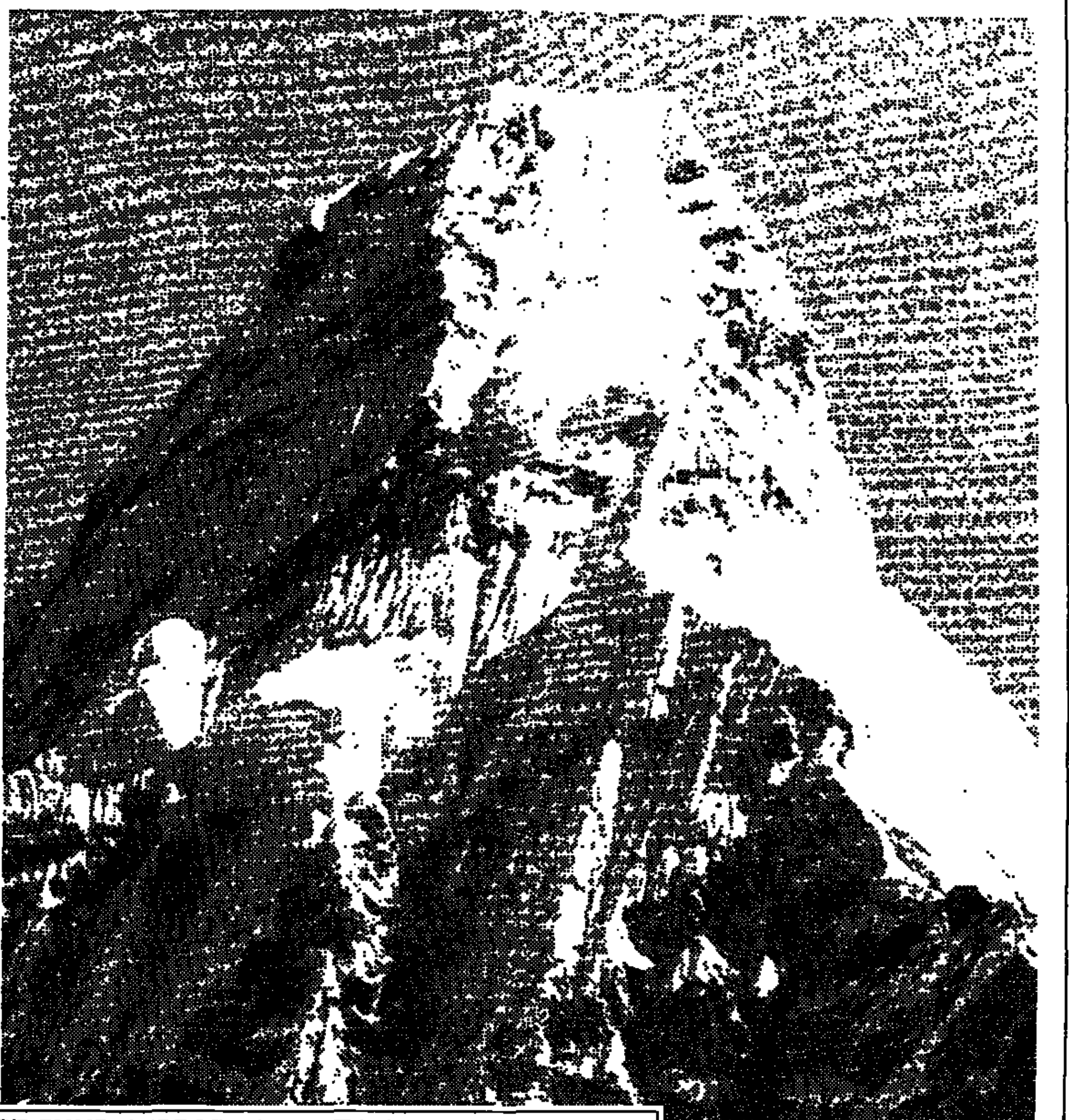

OFFSHORE FUND PERFORMANCE TO 3RD NOVEMBER 1997

	SINCE LAUNCH			5 YEARS
	LAUNCH DATE	% CHANGE	POSITION IN SECTOR	% CHANGE
International Growth	25.1.83	+667.4	3 out of 17	+100.2
Emerging Companies	8.4.85	+750.9	1 out of 30	+135.9
American Growth	21.4.84	+1356.2	1 out of 12	+126.2
Far Eastern Growth	8.11.86	+336.9	1 out of 13	+88.8
Japanese Growth	30.11.91	+0.6	13 out of 72	+4.9
European Growth	8.11.86	+267.5	5 out of 6	+134.9
UK Growth	24.10.87	+418.3	1 out of 26	+176.4
Asian Smaller Markets	8.3.93	+40.6	8 out of 68	–
Latin American Growth	31.1.95	+25.4	21 out of 27	–

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Templeton heads for Russia with optimism

A new East European investment trust has had doubts expressed at its timing, says **Caroline Merrell**

TRUST WATCH

Timing is everything in investment management, and Dr Mark Mobius, Templeton's leading emerging market guru, must have some doubts about his timing in the launch of the company's new Eastern European investment trust.

The recent catastrophic falls in stock prices in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and now South Korea have implications for all emerging economies. After all, these Far Eastern countries were deemed to be examples of the economic miracle.

Within them workers toiled for far less than their Western counterparts, while enjoying a feeling of growing domestic wealth. Over the past year, this image has taken a big knock. Thailand is more than 80 per cent down, while other markets such as Malaysia and Indonesia are 60 per cent lower.

Dr Mobius will have a difficult job in tempting investors to part with their cash to put into the new fund which will buy the shares of companies in the former Eastern bloc.

After all, if the reasonably politically stable countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia can suffer such dramatic falls, then what of the more esoteric markets of Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan?

Like all fund managers faced with stock market collapses of immense proportions, Dr Mobius is optimistic. He sees the falls as a "buying opportunity". He believes that Templeton, which has a stock-picking approach, will still be able to find value in companies in these emerging markets, where industries such as mining and oilfield production dominate.

However, he does believe that globally, international markets will not rise very much next year, because of turmoil in the East.

Dr Mobius said: "Ten years ago anyone who predicted that Eastern Europe would be a hot new emerging market would have been dismissed as insane. But following the fall of communism and the initial shock therapy of market reforms, many of the countries in the region have moved on to a growth path.

"This has been accompanied by increasing integration with the West — more than 70 per cent of Hungary's trade is with OECD countries, 65 per cent of Poland's trade is with the European Union and the Czech Republic's biggest trading partner is Germany.

"The region's stock markets are also booming as a result of the privatisation drive which has led to a huge increase in the number of listed companies," he claims.

However, financial advisers have doubts about the trust. BESt Investment, while acknowledging Dr Mobius's undoubted track record in producing results in emerging markets, believes that the sheer geographical area that the fund's analysts have to cover may hinder its progress.

It pointed out that the manager had only two analysts looking at 27 countries. Only when the analysts had done their work would Dr Mobius move in for a company visit.

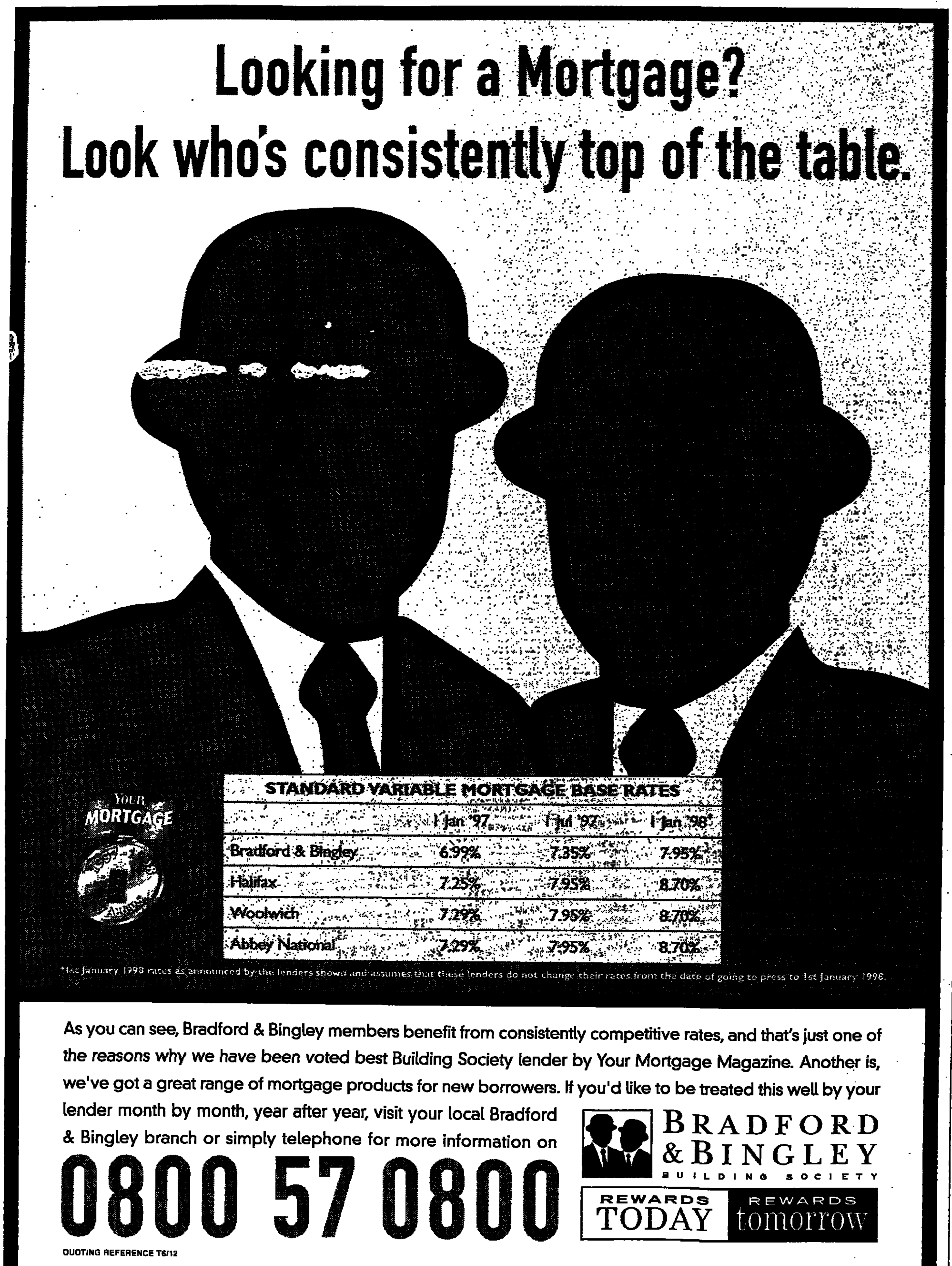
BESt Investment also believes that there are other similar funds on the market, such as Barings Emerging Europe Fund, which is currently operating at a big discount. Dr Mobius said that the difficulty in finding the right stock would mean that the fund was likely to hold cash for some time.

Mark Dampier, Churchill Investments director, said: "I will not be offering the Eastern Europe fund. Many of the countries of Eastern Europe have done very well over the last year. For instance, Russia is up over 150 per cent on the year. It is bound to be an extremely volatile area, because of what has happened in the Far East. Anyone who does want to invest should take a very long-term view — five years at least."

He added: "I would not knock Templeton, it is an extremely good investment house. You can get access to this market through other funds such as the Barings Emerging Market Fund, which is currently standing at a big discount. There is also extremely big political risk in these areas. Who really understands what is happening?"

The initial charge on the fund is 5 per cent and the annual management charge is 1.75 per cent. The minimum investment is £60 per month or a £3,000 lump sum.

The old and the new: Marina Siumona, who has a Moscow beauty salon, with a reminder of the old days



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Halifax leads way with new year rise in rates for savers

The Halifax will be increasing its interest rates for its 15 million savers in the new year. The announcement was made after the Bank of England revealed on Thursday that it will be holding rates at 7.25 per cent. It follows a flurry of rate rises by many of the leading banks and building societies this week.

Gren Folwell, deputy chief executive, said: "Following Thursday's meeting it now makes sense to pass on the benefits of the increased rates to our 15 million savers as well as confirming the new standard variable mortgage rate for our borrowers."

Most building societies are lifting interest levels — but on selected accounts only

Among the building societies to announce rises this week was the Portman. It will be raising its savings rates as it reopens its doors to small investors by cutting the minimum initial deposit for its savings account from £1,000 to £100.

The Portman announced a 0.25 percentage point increase on its instant access account to 5.5 per cent and the same rise in its fixed-interest bond to 7.5 per cent. The increase takes effect on Monday.

Nationwide, the UK's biggest building society, reduced its minimum opening level to £1 last month on the condition that investors agree to hand over any future windfall gains to charity. It also increased its rates to 6.7 per cent a year. *Sainsbury and Tesco, which* offer similar postal accounts, pay 6.5 per cent.

The Woolwich will also raise the rates of interest on several accounts next week after this week's rises in its postal rates. Monday's rise will include the Woolwich Card Saver Account, which will pay 7 per cent gross on balances of more than £50.

The Woolwich was one of many to raise savings rates in response to the recent increase in base rates. The Bank of England raised rates by 0.25 points to 7.25 per cent at the start of November. A spokesman for the Woolwich said: "We don't always put rates up straightaway. We do it when the market conditions are right to keep ourselves competitive."

Abbey National was the first leading bank to announce rises in its savings rates. Its Investor 90 account began to pay 0.25 points more from last month.

Most building societies have not announced across-the-board increases but have chosen to raise rates on selected accounts. However, last week saw the most movement in interest rate rises as Lloyds, NatWest, Barclays, Birmingham Midshires, Northern Rock and TSB all put up their rates. Increases this week average 0.15 points, according to *Moneyfacts*, the data provider. TSB's 90-Day Notice Account had its rate increased to 7.5 per cent on balances of £100,000. TSB Tessa, meanwhile, went up to 7.3 per cent from 7.2 per cent.

Barclays increased rates on a number of accounts, but the biggest rise was the one-year fixed Tessa, which increased 0.4 points to 7.25 per cent.

Larger amounts with Northern Rock will benefit from a 0.1 point increase in Select Instant accounts.

Children saving with Birmingham Midshires received a 0.5 point rise in their Smartstart accounts, which pay 7.25 per cent for savings of more than £25, and 7.5 per cent on investments of more than £500.

While the Birmingham Midshires children's account has been selected by *Moneyfacts* as one of the best on the market, the building society has been accused by *Which?*, the Consumers' Association magazine, of offering its customers unfair deals.

This week *Which?* says that customers of the Birmingham Midshires are suffering from high mortgage rates and low savings rates and could be disappointed with their windfalls.

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Susan Emmett on how to give girl power and boy power

What they really, really want this Christmas

NEIL MUNNS

If you can't have Ginger Spice, or a doll, a bank account is the next best thing

Forget oranges and jigsaws, what kids want, what they really, really want this Christmas is a Spice Girls doll. Be it Scary, Ginger, Baby, Posh or Sporty, miniature versions of the fab five have been snapped up since going on sale on Monday.

But with their latest single, *Spice up your Life*, at number one for just a week and labelled "worst song" by *Smash Hits* last Sunday, it looks as if the Spices are losing their flavour.

Clued-up parents wanting to give their daughters real "girl power" (or their sons whatever the male equivalent might be) should consider something less ephemeral and think of cash as an alternative. After all, how else is your emancipated 18-year-old going to fund that backpacking trip round Australia?

There are several ways of giving your children money. The strategy will depend on the child's age and the depth of your pockets. The options include accounts with building societies, National Savings, friendly societies and unit and investment trusts.

Dani Glover, a financial adviser at Fiona Price and Partners, says: "The choice depends on what the donor wants the money to do. People should buy the investment that suits. With very small children the risk of unit trusts and investment trusts is reduced. The older they are, the more cautious you have got to be in case an 18-year-old's birthday coincides with a stock market crash."

Since children, like adults, are entitled to a personal tax allowance of £4,045, most children have tax-free savings. Children can reclaim the tax on their savings if their total taxable income is under this limit. But children under 16 years of age cannot apply themselves for a tax rebate. Parents or guardians must complete an R85 form on behalf of the child so that they can have the gross income.

However, parents wanting to invest for their children should note the £100 rule, where any income of more than £100 a year gained on money paid by parents is taxed as their income. This is roughly the equivalent of £1,600 paid into an average building society account. Money given by friends or other members of the family is exempt from this rule.

For the cost of a plastic "Spice" (£24.99), parents can invest in National Savings Children's Bonds. The bonds are sold in units of £25, with a maximum holding of £1,000. Anyone over 16 years old can buy a bond for anyone under the age of 16. And because they pay a fixed rate of 6.75 per cent if held for five years, these bonds are probably the most secure form of investment.

However, with interest rates on the rise, children may be better off with a bank or building society account. Competition on the high street has made banks and building societies take a second look at what they offer kids, and rates for children's accounts have grown to adult sizes.

Top of the charts for a saving of £25, according to *Moneyfacts*, is Birmingham Midshires with a rate of 7.25 per cent. The building society offers a higher rate of 7.5 per cent for deposits of £500.

Vicki Burn, deputy editor of *Moneyfacts*, said: "During the past few months many institutions have made their children's accounts more competitive. In recent years the best rates tended to be offered by the smaller building societies. However, several high street institutions now have very competitive rates — in one case (Nationwide) the rate has more than doubled since this time last year."

Savings with friendly societies are also attractive with those giving away small amounts. Up to £25 a month can be saved in a bond account. Policies last for a minimum of ten years and mature when the child reaches the age of 18. This option has the advantage of being low-risk and tax-free, but because the charges are fixed they can weigh heavily on small savings.

Parents of young children with £1,000 to £100,000 to invest could consider putting the money into unit trusts — an equity-based investment spread across a number of shares.

John Spiers, chairman of BESt investment, believes that by their nature unit trusts lend themselves to children's investments. "Usually when you are investing for children, you are looking for growth over the long term," he said. "So an equity-based investment is a good idea."

Unit trusts are bought under the parents' name with the child's initials attached unless the investment is wrapped in a bare trust. The advantages of this trust comes into play only if the parent makes the gift. With a bare trust the income gained counts as part of the child's personal allowance, not the parents'. Gifts from other members of the family are taxed as the child's anyway.

Placing an investment in a bare trust costs between £75 and £100, and some financial advisers say that it is worth it only for investments of more than £5,000. However, there are some unit trusts which come with a bare trust attached at no extra cost.

Invesco runs a unit trust specifically designed for children. The Rupert Children's Fund invests a minimum of 70 per cent in the FTSE 100 and can be opened with just £50 or by monthly payments of £20. It has an initial charge of 3 per cent and a 1.5 per cent annual management fee.

But Mr Spiers advises investing in unit trusts which diversify internationally.

Next week — tax-efficient gifts for children.

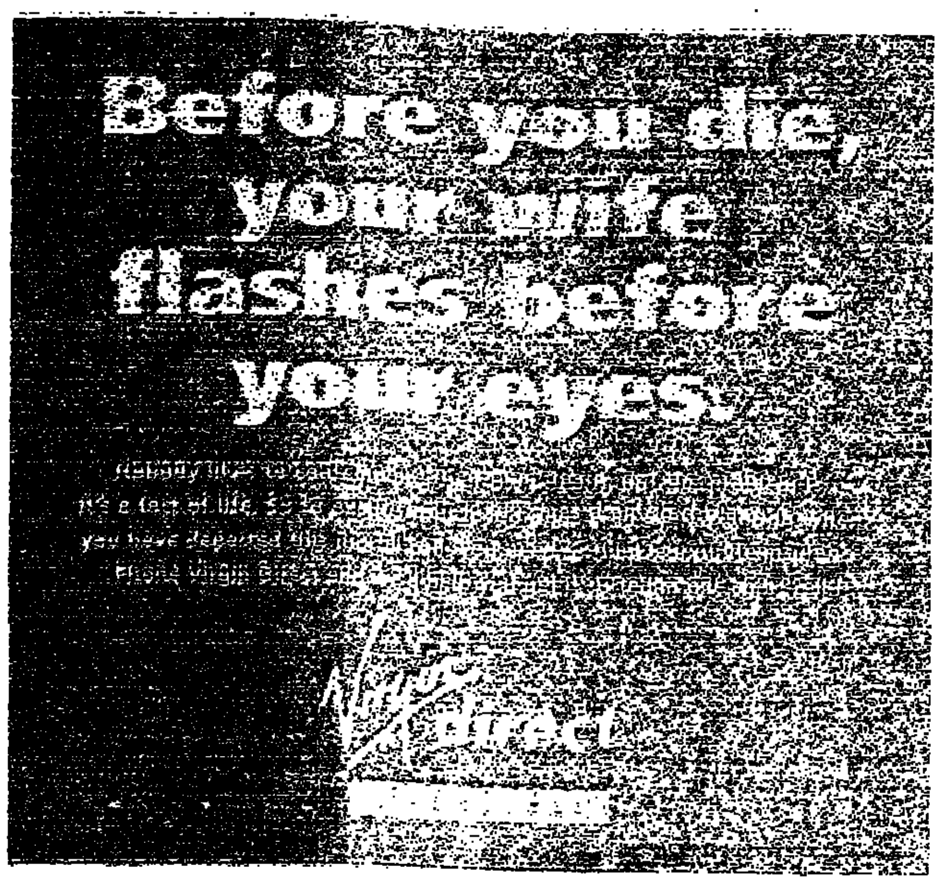
HIGH STREET CHILDREN'S ACCOUNTS

		Deposit	Rate
Birmingham Midshires BS 0645 720721	Smartstart	£25	7.25%
Birmingham Midshires BS	Smartstart	£500	7.50%
Bradford & Bingley BS 01274 555332	Kidzone	£10	6.35%
Britannia BS 0800 132304	Firstsaver	£1	7.00%
Britannia BS	Firstsaver	£500	7.25%
Coventry BS 0345 665522	Interest Zone	£1	6.75%
Nationwide BS 0500 302010	Smart 2 Save	£1	7.20%
NatWest (5 year) 0800 505050	Savings Bond	£1,000	7.25%
Woolwich 0800 222200	Woolwich for Kids	£1	5.50%

BEST BUY CHILDREN'S ACCOUNTS

		Deposit	Rate
Beverley BS 01482 881510	Young Savers	£1	6.75%
Cambridge BS 01223 315440	First	£1	7.35%
Chorley & District BS 01257 279373	Young Chorleian	£5	6.75%
Earl Shilton BS 01455 844422	Early Saver	£1	7.00%
Furness BS 01229 824560	Young Savers	£500	7.25%
Leeds & Holbeck BS 0500 225777	Youngsaver	£1,000	6.80%
Melton Mowbray BS (30 day) 01664 63937	Sunny Bond	£250	7.50%
Tipton & Coseley BS 0121 5572551	Cash Zone	£10	7.25%

All accounts are instant unless stated. Source: Moneyfacts



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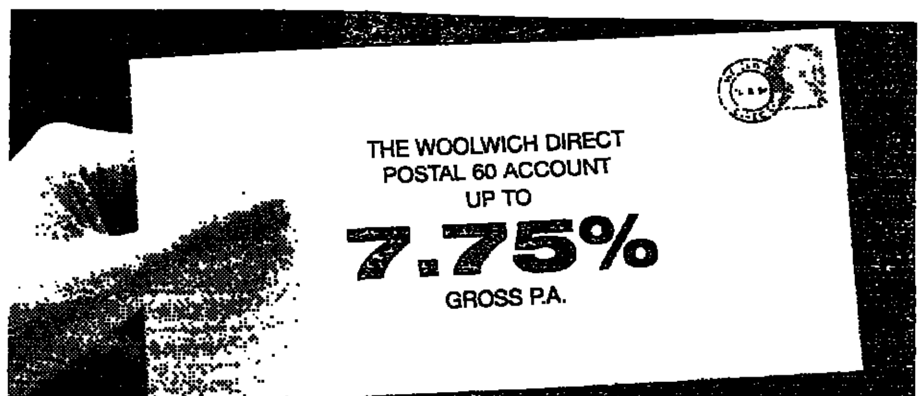

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RATES EFFECTIVE FROM 21 NOVEMBER 1997	GROSS PAID ANNUALLY*
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£50,000 - £99,999	7.55%
£25,000 - £49,999	7.35%
£10,000 - £24,999	7.15%
£5,000 - £9,999	6.95%
£2,500 - £4,999	6.75%

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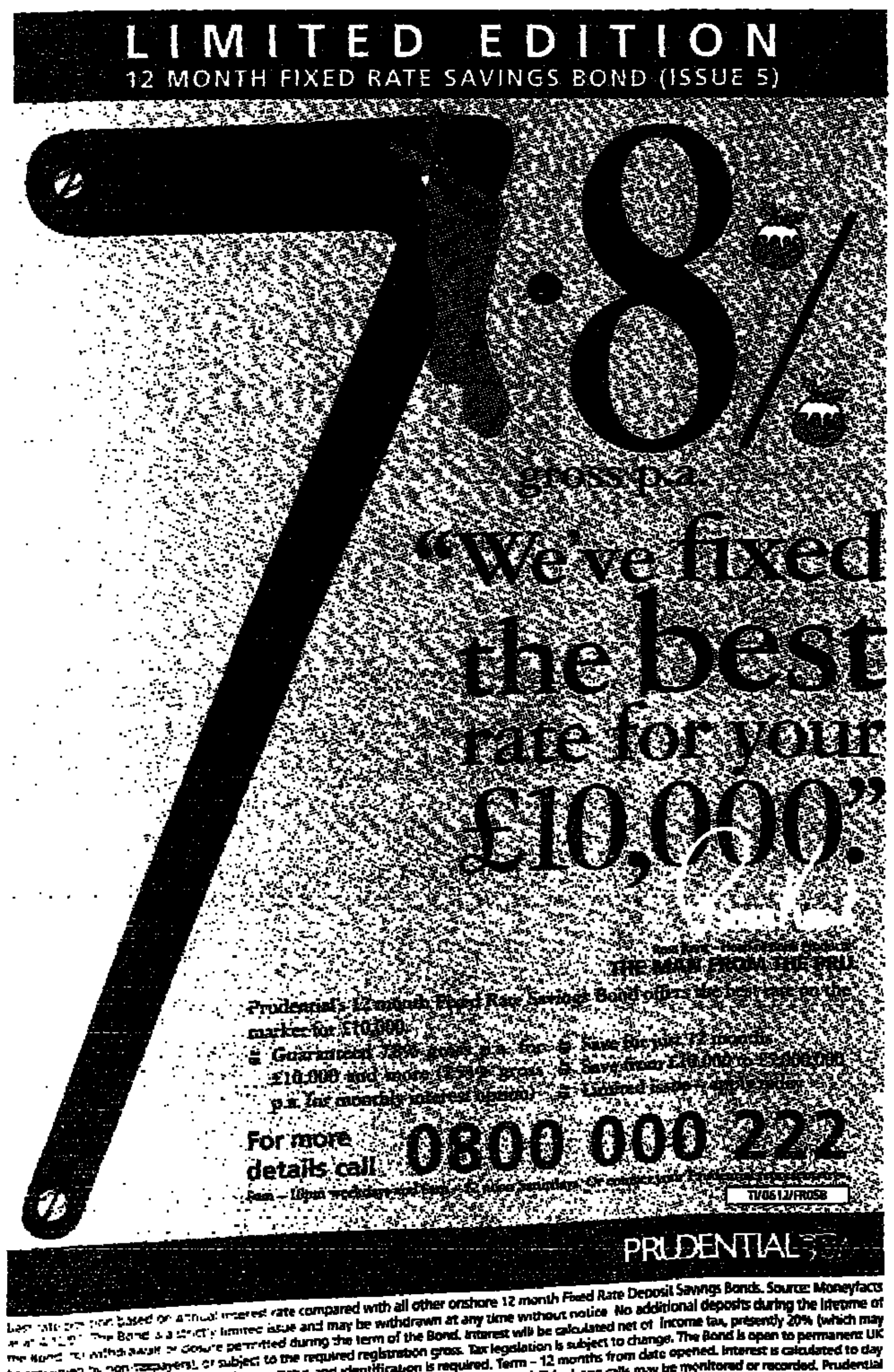
Gross rates for monthly income £2,500+ 6.55%, £5,000+ 6.74%, £10,000+ 6.93%, £25,000+ 7.11%, £50,000+ 7.30%, £100,000+ 7.49%. Balances below £2,500 earn annual interest at 1.25% gross and monthly interest at 1.24% gross.
*Interest will be payable net of the lower rate of income tax (currently 20%) or, subject to the required certification, gross. Where the tax deducted exceeds an investor's tax liability (if any) a claim may be made to the Inland Revenue for repayment of tax. For individuals whose income falls within the lower or basic tax bands, the tax deducted will match their liability to tax on the interest and they will have no more tax to pay on it. Individuals who are liable at the higher rate of income tax of 40% will have to pay additional tax on the interest to cover the difference between the tax deducted and the higher rate tax due. Interest will be calculated daily, from the fourth bank working day after receipt of a deposit by cheque. Cash deposits will not be accepted. Proof of identity will be required. The first withdrawal made in each calendar year of up to £10,000 may be made without notice or penalty. Further withdrawals may be made immediately subject to the loss of 60 days' interest. The account can be closed without penalty by giving 60 clear days' written notice. If a withdrawal is made where you incur a penalty you will not achieve the stated interest rate. Interest rates are subject to variation. The minimum investment is £2,500. Full terms and conditions available on request. Registered Office: Woolwich plc, Watling Street, Bexleyheath, Kent DA6 7RR. Registered in England No 3295699. PA218



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[illegible] based on annual interest rate compared with all other onshore 12 month Fixed Rate Deposit Savings Bonds. Source: Moneyfacts [illegible] This Bond is a strictly limited issue and may be withdrawn at any time without notice. No additional deposits during the lifetime of the Bond, no withdrawals or closure permitted during the term of the Bond. Interest will be calculated net of Income tax, presently 20% (which may be reclaimed by non-taxpayers), or subject to the required registration gross. Tax legislation is subject to change. The Bond is open to permanent UK residents only. Opening a Bond is subject to status and identification is required. Term – 12 months from date opened. Interest is calculated to day [illegible] Full terms and conditions issued on request and on opening the Bond. Telephone calls may be monitored or recorded. Prudential [illegible] is registered in England and Wales. Registered Office: 142 Holborn Bars, London EC1N 2NH. Registered Number 2999842.

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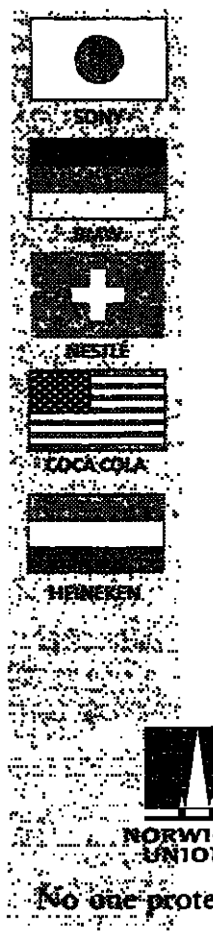

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†Please note that it might not be possible to continue investment in a PEP after April 1999 when the Government plan to introduce a new Individual Savings Account. Past performance is no guide to the future; unit prices can go down as well as up; the performance of PEPs invested in equity based assets will reduce from 1999 due to the loss of a reclaimable tax credit. You should consider PEPs a medium to long term investment. Funds invested abroad may alter with exchange rate fluctuations. Information/advice will only relate to Norwich Union products. We may telephone you to confirm receipt of your information pack. *Buy to sell performance of the Norwich Global Tracking PEP, gross income reinvested 1/7/96 to 30/11/97. **Although the Norwich Global Tracking PEP has only been available for 1 year, if you had invested £1,000 on 1/10/92 in the underlying funds of the Norwich Global Tracking PEP (in the same proportions as the PEP) your investment would have been worth £2,002 (a growth of 100.2%) on 30/11/97, assuming the income tax benefits of a PEP also applied. Data that you provide may be used by Norwich Union group companies, your financial adviser or other relevant organisations for marketing purposes such as market research and contacting you regarding your insurance and investment needs. For your protection all telephone calls will be recorded. The Personal Investment Authority and IMRO regulate Norwich Union Portfolio Services Limited.

THE TIMES MONEY INFORMATION SERVICE

Pet plans can be a dog's breakfast

The amount you spend at the vet can be determined by where you live, while your pet's insurance policy might be more trouble than it is worth, according to a survey out this week. The most expensive vets can charge up to five times as much as the cheapest for the same treatments, says *Which?* the Consumers' Association magazine.

The survey also revealed that many people find choosing the right insurance policy confusing. Many insurers will not take on older animals or they reduce the cover when a pet reaches a certain age. In some cases you may not be able to claim for particular diseases or conditions for certain types of animal.

■ RECEIVING retail vouchers as a Christmas bonus from employers may become a thing of the past. According to the Contributions Agency, vouchers appeal to "rogue employers" who deliberately give their staff vouchers in order to avoid paying national insurance.

Receiving retail vouchers instead of cash can mean that staff stay below the lower earnings limit for national insurance and as a result may lose entitlement to contributory benefits such as the jobseeker's allowance and income support. From April 1999 retail vouchers will no longer escape this liability.

■ NEARLY three in four people believe that the leading high street banks should keep rural branches open, even if they are unprofitable, according to a new survey.

The survey, which was carried out by Omnimas, the market research organisation, also showed that most people think rural post offices are important and should be supported.

In the past seven years, more than 2,600 branches of the leading banks have been closed, many in rural areas, according to the British Bankers Association.

■ YOUR toddler may want a teddy for Christmas but the Tunbridge Wells Equitable Society suggests that a baby bond could help to fund a university education. A baby bond is a tax-efficient with-profits endowment policy on the life of the child. For more information contact the society on 01892 515353.

SUSAN EMMETT

SAVERS' BEST BUYS

INSTANT ACCESS ACCOUNTS	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Woolwich 0800 222200	Card Saver	Instant	£50	7.00	Yly
C&G 0800742437	Inst Transfer	InstantB	£1,000	7.25	Yly
Legal & General 0500 111200	Direct Access	Postal	£2,500	7.15	Yly
Alliance & Leic 0845 608 8860	First Cls Inst	Postal	£10,000	7.50	Yly

NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Bristol & West 0800 202121	Postal 30	30 day p	£10,000	7.80	Yly
Northern Rock 0500 505000	Select 90	90 day p	£10,000	7.90	Yly
Bristol & West 0800 202121	Fix for Six	6 month	£5,000	7.75	OM
Investec (UK) 0171 203 1650	Base Plus	1 year	£2,001	8.00	OM

FIRST TESSAS (TAX FREE)	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Sun Banking Corp 01438 744505	Premier+feeder	5 year	£3,000	7.85	Yly
Investec Bank (UK) 0171 203 1650	Premier+feeder	5 year	£9,000	7.85	Yly
Mansfield BS 01246 202055	Premier+feeder	5 year	£500	7.75	Yly
Yorkshire BS 0800 378836	Premier+feeder	5 year	£2,000	7.65	Yly

CREDIT CARDS BEST BUYS

CREDIT CARDS	Card type	Interest per month	APR%	Fee per annum
Capital One Bank 0800 669000	Visa	0.64%N	7.90%N	Nil
Robert Fleming/S&P 0800 829100	MasterCard/Visa	1.00%	14.00%	£12
Co-operative Bank 0800 109000	Advantage Visa	0.64%NC	7.90%N	Nil

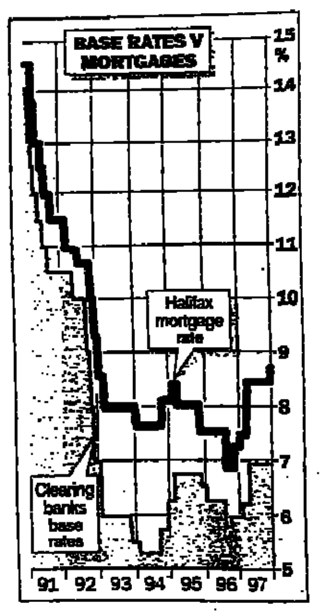
PERSONAL LOANS BEST BUYS

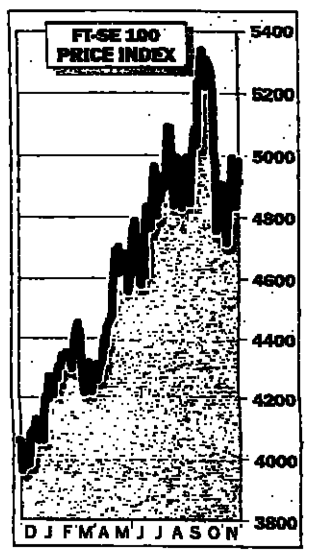
PERSONAL LOANS	APR	Monthly payment on £5,000 for 3yrs with insurance	no insurance
Direct Line 0181 680 9966	12.80%A	£183.75	£166.38
Capital One Direct 0800 216252	12.90%	£189.48	£166.54
Alliance & Leic Grp 0990 626262	13.30%	£187.73	£167.56

NB. A = Minimum age 22 years, B = Withdrawals via Bank Clearing System, C = no interest free period, F = Fixed Rate (all other rates variable), N = Introductory rate for a limited period, OM = Interest paid on maturity, P = By Post only

* RATES SHOWN ARE GROSS AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE
PLEASE CHECK RATES BEFORE INVESTING

Source: *Money Facts, the Monthly Guide to Investment & Mortgage Rates* (01692 500 677)





NATIONAL SAVINGS

	Gross rate	At tax rates 20%	40%	Min/maximum investment £	Notice	Contact
Ordinary A/c¹	1.50	1.20	0.90	£10-£10k**		0645 645000
Investment A/c*₆	4.75	3.80	2.85	£1-£499**	1mth	0645 645000
Income Bond*₆	6.50	5.20	3.90	£2k-£25k**	3mth	0645 645000
First Opt Bond₄	6.75	5.40	4.05	£1k-£20k**		0645 645000
44th Issue Cert†₂₃	5.35			£100-£10k	8day	0645 645000
Children's Bond†	6.75			£25-£1k	1mth	0645 645000
Gen Ext Rate	3.51					0645 645000
Capital Bond₃₆	6.65	5.32	3.99	£100-£250k	8day	0645 645000
11th Ind Linked†₃	2.75			£100-£10k	8day	0645 645000
Pensnrs Bond S3₆	7.00	5.60	4.20	£500-£50k₅	60day	0645 645000

¹ first £70 (£140 jt) of int tax free [illegible] reinvested proceeds †Tax free *Rates gross and [illegible] ²0.2% net bonus for £20,000+ ³£100,000 jt in addition [illegible] ered in full ⁵£500-100,000 earn higher rates **Tiered rates apply

PENSION ANNUITIES

All figures are the gross annual annuity (£100,000 purchase), guaranteed 5 years, paid monthly in advance

SINGLE LIFE (level ann)	Male: Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Canada Life.........Level	£9,034	£10,130	£11,620
Sun Lf of Can.......Level	£9,062	£10,122	£11,564
Standard Life ....Level	£9,044	£10,136	£11,564
Scottish Wid.........Level	£9,100	£10,120	£11,500
Legal & General...Level	£9,082	£10,109	£11,401

SINGLE LIFE	Female: Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Prudential ....Level	£8,386	£9,205	£10,649
Generali ....Level	£8,227	£9,159	£10,437
Scottish Widows ..Level	£8,290	£8,960	£9,950
Sun Lf of Can.......Level	£8,306	£9,067	£10,176
Canada Life ....Level	£8,325	£9,151	£10,353

JOINT LIFE, 2/3 WIDOWS (level annuity)	Male: Age 60 Female: Age 55	Age 65 Age 60	Age 70 Age 65
Scottish Widows ..Level	£7,927	£8,424	£9,091
Sun Lf of Can.......Level	£7,915	£8,511	£9,350
Generali ....Level	£7,855	£8,512	£9,412
Equitable Life ....Level	£7,807	£8,384	£9,197
Prudential ....Level	£7,901	£8,445	£9,178

Source: *Annuity Direct (0171 684 5000)*

Statistics compiled by Jacqui Spray

GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS

ANNUAL INCOME

Rates as at June 19, 1997

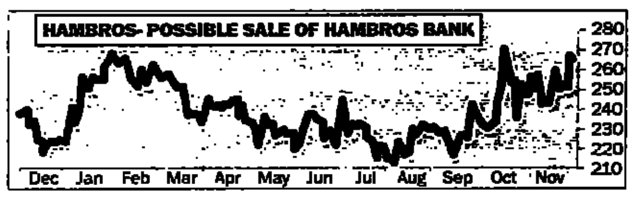
	Investment (£)	Company	Standard Rate (%)
1 Year			
	5,000	AIG Life	6.38
	10,000	GE Fin Assur	6.75
	20,000	Hambro Assured	6.80
	50,000	Hambro Assured	6.80
2 Years			
	1,000	Hambro Assured	6.10
	10,000	Hambro Assured	6.80
	20,000	Hambro Assured	6.80
	50,000	Hambro Assured	6.80
3 Years			
	1,000	Hambro Assured	5.90
	3,000	ITT London & Ed	6.30
	20,000	Hambro Assured	6.65
	50,000	Hambro Assured	6.70
4 Years			
	1,000	Hambro Assured	6.06
	3,000	ITT London & Ed	6.15
5 Years			
	1,000	Hambro Assured	6.00
	10,000	Hambro Assured	6.55

Source: Chamberlain de Broé 0171-434 4222. Net rates. Income and capital guaranteed. Early surrender. Terms vary. Monthly income may be available.

PIBS

FIXED RATE	Gross coupon	Buying price	% Gross yield	Issue price	Minimum purchase amount
Birmingham Midshires	9.380%	121.00	7.750	100.17	1,000
Bradford & Bingley	11.630%	150.50	7.720	100.13	10,000
Bradford & Bingley	13.000%	168.25	7.730	100.20	10,000
Britannia	13.000%	168.25	7.730	100.42	1,000
Coventry	12.130%	155.75	7.780	100.75	1,000
First National	11.750%	151.75	7.740	100.25	10,000
Leeds & Holbeck	13.380%	173.00	7.730	100.23	1,000
Newcastle	10.750%	141.75	7.580	100.32	1,000
Newcastle	12.630%	166.25	7.590	100.45	1,000
Skipton	12.780%	170.75	7.540	100.48	1,000
Northern Rock	12.630%	163.50	7.720	100.14	1,000
PERPETUAL SUBORDINATED BONDS					
Chelt & Gloucester	11.750%	156.00	7.530	100.98	50,000
Halifax	8.750%	113.75	7.690	100.62	50,000
Halifax	12.000%	149.50	8.030	100.28	50,000
Halifax	13.630%	180.75	7.540	100.00	50,000
Bristol & West	13.380%	171.50	7.800	100.34	1,000

PIBS = Permanent interest-bearing shares. *Source* NatWest Markets



LARGER LENDERS

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies				
Chelsea 0800 291291	5.39	£20-150k	80	Fixed to 1.2.00
Nationwide 0800 302010	5.75	to £300k	90	2.35% disc for 2 years
Britannia 0800 526350	5.74	no max	80	Fixed for 2 yrs
Banks				
Bank of Ireland 01189 510100	0.99	£20-145k	95	Fixed for 6 mths 3% disc-6 mths
Bristol & West 0117 979 2222	2.90	£15-no max	90	Fixed to 1.11.98

LARGER LOANS

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies				
Scarborough 0990 133149	0.99	£15-100k	95	7.24% dsc-6 mth 2%-6mth,0.5%-1y
Nottingham Imper. 0115 9817220	0.75	£25-150k	75	Fixed at 0.75% to 31.1.98
Leeds & Holbeck 0113 225 7777	1.20	to £180k	95	7% dsc-6 mths, 1%dsc-12 mths
Banks				
Bank of Ireland 01189 510100	0.99	£20-145k	95	Fixed for 6 mth 3% dsc-6 mth
Bristol & West 0117 979 2222	2.90	£15-no max	90	Fixed to 1.11.98

FIRST-TIME BUYERS

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies				
Newbury 01635 43676	4.85	£30-100k	95	3% discount for 1 year
Mansfield 01246 202055	2.20	£25-250k	90	6%dsc-6mth,1.49% -6mth 0.99%-1 yr
Clay Cross 01246 862120	5.25	£15-100k	95	3% discount for 1 year
Banks				
Bank of Ireland 01189 510100	0.99	£20-145k	95	Fixed for 6 mths 3% disc-6 mths
Abbey National 0800 555100	6.05	to £125k	95	Fixed to 31.1.00

Larger lenders, loans and first-time buyers tables by Bay's Guides Ltd (01753 880482)

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UNIT-LINKED INSURANCE INVESTMENTS

هكذا من الأول

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Patrick Collinson says providers promised a knockout punch

Asia trips up pensions tied to investment trusts

Cheap investment trust pensions promised to deliver a knockout blow to overcharging insurance company personal pensions. But the collapse in Asian markets and widening trust discounts are threatening to give investment trust pensions a bloody nose.

Some Asia-invested trusts have been in free-fall this year. Shares in Pacific Assets, managed by Ivory & Sime, are down a staggering 55 per cent, falling from 116p at the start of the year to 53p this week. Over the same period, Foreign & Colonial's Pacific Trust has fallen 31 per cent. But why should investment trust pension holders be worse-hit than other pension holders?

Roddy Kohn, an investment trust broker and member of the Personal Investment Authority, the regulator, said: "Because of the limited range of investment trust pensions, there is a reasonable probability that you could end up in a nightmare situation. Although they are cheap, you can get egg all over your face."

Investment trusts have also suffered more than similarly invested unit trusts, as demand for the shares has fallen even faster than the value of their underlying assets.

Only four companies offer investment trust pensions: Flemings, Foreign & Colonial, Edinburgh Fund Managers and Ivory & Sime. Investors can choose from a range of trusts, including generalist funds and managed portfolios.

But of Edinburgh's choice of 13 trusts for its pension, five are in high-risk Asian and emerging markets. Flemings, a Far East specialist, has a range of 18 trusts under its pension plan, with five invested in Asian or emerging markets. Lower-risk with-profits funds, the bastion of insurance company personal pensions, are not offered by investment trust companies. Investment trust personal pensions are only three years old, with the first launched by Foreign & Colonial in 1994. Flemings followed in 1995, and earlier this year slashed charges, claiming its pension was the cheapest on the market.

But Mr Kohn said: "At the time, I recall Flemings was promoting its Far East (now Fleming Asian) Trust quite heavily as a recovery play. If you were on the wrong end of a recommendation like that a year ago you wouldn't be very happy now." Other Fleming investment trusts available for pension investment, such as the Claverhouse and American Trusts, have performed well.

Mr Kohn said: "I accept that you could have done well if you picked the right trust, but this does highlight the risks in using investment trusts for a pension. Overall, I am a fan of investment trusts, and would use a nice defensive, low-to-medium risk trust such as TR Property, but it's simply not available for use in a pension."

However, Hamish Buchan, investment trust analyst at NatWest Markets, rejects the suggestions that investment trust pensions are inherently risky. He said: "It is highly unlikely that anyone would put all their pension investment into a single trust, and you shouldn't just look at one-year performance when considering a pension — it's for the long term. Comparing a single country trust in the Far East with an insurance company with-profits fund is comparing apples with pears. They are completely different."

SHEREE SMITH

Bangkok is still as hustling and bustling as ever but now the steam has gone out of the stock market and the currency

WHAT IS AN INVESTMENT TRUST PENSION?

Investment trusts are pooled equity investments, typically in a wide selection of stocks and shares. A number of investment trust management groups allow you to pay pension contributions, enjoying the usual pension tax advantages, into one or more of their trusts.

Q For whom are they a suitable product?

A Anybody with a company-sponsored or occupational scheme, enjoying employer contributions, is well-advised to stay with the scheme. But for the self-employed or those without a company scheme, investment trust pensions should be considered alongside the traditional insurance company personal pension. Investment trusts can also be used as a free-standing additional voluntary contribution to top up a company pension.

Q So exactly how do they work in practice?

A Your pension contributions are used to buy shares in an investment trust, whose value may go down as well as up. The value of the pension is determined by the performance of the trust, minus costs, over the investment period. Investors pick a trust or a selection of trusts offered by the manager, and switches can be made between trusts. Minimum contributions can be as little as £100 per month or £1,000 lump sums.

Q What are the advantages over traditional personal pensions?

A Personal pensions are the domain of the insurance industry, and are criticised for high set-up charges and onerous ongoing administrative charges. In some schemes these can result in a serious reduction in future returns. Investment trusts generally have lower and more transparent charges. There are no baffling "capital" or "accumulation" units or "nil allocation periods".

Investment trust personal pensions also have a high degree of flexibility. There are no penalties for stopping, starting or varying contributions or retirement date.

Q What are the disadvantages of investment trust personal pensions?

A Volatility and spread of investments. As the recent sharp falls in Asian markets confirm, having all your pension eggs in one investment trust basket can be an extremely risky strategy.

Insurance company personal pensions tend to be invested in lower-risk, with-profits funds, which have a spread of foreign and domestic equities, bonds, property and cash. The aim of the with-profits fund is to smooth returns and lock in gains. They also usually have mechanisms to transfer your money into lower-risk investments to avoid a stock market crash wiping out your fund weeks or months before retirement.

Q What sort of charges are involved?

A There is an initial set-up charge, typically around £100, an annual administration fee of around £50, and an annual management charge of up to 0.5 per cent of the value of the fund. Stamp duty of 0.5 per cent is also payable on share purchases and switches.

There is also the question of fees to advisers. Investment trusts are usually aimed at fee-based brokers and so are not generally structured to pay out commission.

Q Who offers investment trust pensions?

A Edinburgh Fund Managers (0800 838993)
Fleming Investment Trust Managers (0500 500324)
Foreign & Colonial (0171-454 1415)
John Govett (0800 252338)
Ivory & Sime (0131-220 4239)

The Association of Investment Trust Companies produces a free factsheet on investment trust pensions. Telephone 0171-282 5555 for a copy.

WEEKEND MONEY LETTERS

Added burden for borrowers

From the Chief Executive, Market Harborough Building Society

Sir, I write with reference to your article (Prices may surge 11% next year, November 22) regarding higher home loan payments occurring when fixed-rate mortgage deals run out in 1998.

The issue that I think should be raised, and which has not been so far, is that millions of people currently have their mortgage interest payments determined by the annual review system. In effect, some lenders alter their interest rate only once per year, reflecting rises or falls that have taken place during the preceding 12 months.

Clearly, those mortgage customers that are on the annual review system and where review is due to take place in 1998 will be impacted severely (probably by at least 1.25 per cent), this equating to approximately a £45 per month increase on a typical £50,000 interest-only mortgage loan.

I do not believe that the prognosis for the housing market in 1998 is as rosy as some commentators in London seem to believe. In the East Midlands I fear that housing transactions will slow down, that house price inflation will be contained below 3 per cent and that the impact of interest rate rises, the annual review system and the point you raised in your article will lead to increasing levels of arrears in the 2½ to 5 per cent band. Naturally I hope that I am wrong.

Yours faithfully,
PHILIP R. DEARING,
Welland House,
The Square,
Market Harborough, Leics.

A question for the FSA on the link between commission and impartiality

From Mr Alan Jenkins

Sir, When the two thousand staff of the new investor protection watchdog, the Financial Services Authority, are safely ensconced in their Canary Wharf offices, perhaps one of them could spare the time to answer a question that has puzzled me, and possibly other Weekend Money readers, for some time.

This is the question. Why is an independent financial adviser allowed to claim that he offers "utterly impartial advice" and will "select the best product most suited to his client's needs" ... and then do exactly the opposite by recommending the product that pays the most commission? It is difficult to think of any other walk of life where sellers can legitimately disguise their goods and services to the detriment of their customers in this way.

I look forward to reading the FSA's reply to my question in Weekend Money.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN JENKINS,
6 Wisley Road,
SW11.

Small niggle

From Mr G. R. Finney

Sir, My wife has just been advised by Framlington that there will be a "small increase" (from 1 per cent to 1.25 per cent) in the annual management charge of her unit trust, owing to the increasing costs of regulatory compliance and administration.

The new rate may compare favourably with that of other fund managers but to call a swingeing 25 per cent increase small must surely contravene the Trade Descriptions Act!

Yours faithfully,
G. R. FINNEY,
6 Southcote,
Church Road,
Horsell,
Woking,
Surrey.

Unhappy over the inconvenience of National Savings gilt switch

From Mr Eric Mason

Sir, The National Savings Office in Blackpool has notified me as a holder of gilts bought through the National Savings Stock Register that from mid-1998, subject to parliamentary approval, gilts will be administered only by the Bank of England.

Details of the change are to be published in the new year, but this cost-cutting exercise looks ominous to me. Dealing in gilts with the Bank of England at present means going through a stockbroker and paying much higher commissions than National Savings charges.

Moreover, the National Savings Office pays dividends gross, which is very useful to non-taxpayers and low-liability payers like me. The Bank of England deducts income tax, which has to be laboriously reclaimed later from the Inland Revenue. Must we suffer yet another loss of convenience in the name of economy?

Yours faithfully,
ERIC MASON,
7 Long Row,
Snape Road,
Sudbourne,
Suffolk.

Customer still the poor relation

From Mr Robert Breckman

Sir, By having customer relations departments, companies recognise their service to the public is sub-standard.

I am increasingly frustrated at returning shoddy goods, and receiving poor service. The only response from a company is a glib "sorry" and "no one else has complained".

Is it not time that deficient companies be compelled to compensate me for my wasted time, costs and aggravation?

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT BRECKMAN,
49 South Molton Street, W1.

LETTERS to the Weekend Money section are welcomed, but *The Times* regrets it cannot give individual replies or advice. No legal responsibility can be accepted for the advice or statements given in these columns and independent professional advice should always be sought on investment matters.

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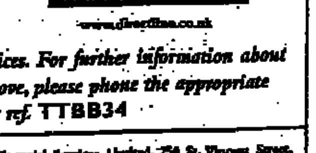

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New savings scheme could hit Pep loans

Anne Ashworth on how Isa might affect certain types of home borrowing

The birth of the individual savings account (Isa) has implications for the thousands of borrowers now repaying their mortgages with personal equity plan (Pep) schemes. The future impact will be greatest on prospective homebuyers in the South East.

A single person contemplating the purchase of a £150,000 flat with a mortgage close to the value of the property may prefer to opt for a *repayment loan*, as an Isa might not yield a big enough return to ensure that the loan would be fully repaid.

Although individuals are entitled to invest £9,000 a year into Peps, there will be a £5,000 annual limit and a £50,000 lifetime limit on contributions.

The Treasury has already conceded that 'sas will no longer be suitable for repaying the £300,000 plus *short-term loans* of those buying mansions because only if the investments were managed expertly would an Isa be guaranteed to yield enough money to repay such a debt over a ten-year period. Attempting to justify the switch from the Pep to the Isa, *ministers are said to be concerned about the numbers of high-risk Pep* mortgages being sold.

But one mortgage broker doubted whether scores of borrowers were being persuaded to take out unsuitable Peps. He commented: "The commissions on Peps are fairly low so, frankly, there is little incentive to recommend them."

Although most Pep mortgage borrowers need have no concern that their loans will not be repaid, they v'ill be seeking reassurances that they will be able to transfer their Pep holdings into an Isa at no cost and without unnecessary bureaucracy.

The Treasury envisages that Pep savings schemes will simply be renamed Isa savings schemes in April. As the average amount saved in a Pep mortgage repayment scheme is £20,000 few will be hit by the £50,000 limit.

However, the Isa consultation acknowledges that the transition will pose problems: "The Government recognises that switching Pep investments into the Isa will not be straightforward and will inevitably take time."

The Halifax, which is the largest provider of Pep mortgages, is sanguine about the Government's proposals. The bank, which has been offering thi- type of loan for three years, has -0,000 customers with Pep mortgages, mostly in joint names. The average loan is £60,000. No borrower will have accumulated £50,000 in a Halifax Pep by April 1999, the date on which the Isa will supplant the Pep.

The Halifax said that the Isa would provide an ideal replacement for the Pep, as the annual limit of £5,000 is several times larger than necessary to meet the average mortgage. The bank has calculated that anyone investing the limit in an Isa would be able at least to repay a £125,000 mortgage. A couple with a joint mortgage each contributing the maximum amount could accumulate £250,000.

Keith Abercrombie of the Halifax said that the bank would be working with the Treasury to ensure that the process of transfer was as streamlined as possible.

Homeowners can spread the risk

This week's announcement of what the Isa will look like in two years' time has left many homeowners using Peps to pay off large interest-only mortgages worried about the future. Although Isas will be suitable vehicles for mortgage repayment, the planned £50,000 ceiling on contributions means a couple will struggle to generate more than £240,000 and certainly no more than £300,000 over 25 years.

One solution is to set up another repayment vehicle to run alongside the Pep when it transfers into an Isa. However, anxious homeowners need not go as far as Jonathan Bowes, a financial adviser working in London. He set up a Pep, a pension and two endowments to repay the large mortgage he and his wife, Fiona, took out to buy their home in Greenwich five years ago.

Despite his profession Mr Bowes, 31, does not claim any foresight: he simply did not want to put all his eggs in one basket. Fortunately, he has saved them both the extra worry which neither of them needs right now as they look forward to having their first child in February. Boy? Girl? The Bowes have no preference, so long as it is not twins. Complicated financial arrangements are one thing, it seems, but home life must be as simple as possible.

DENZIL McNEELANCE

Fiona and Jonathan Bowes's home is being paid for with a Pep, a pension and two endowments

Mr Bowes pays £100 a month into the Pep which now holds £10,000, a long way from the Isa limit. He stuck with M&G's Pep for four years before switching to Fidelity this year.

Mr Bowes explains the arrangement: "Because I am a financial adviser I decided to spread the risk. I did not want all the money going into unit-linked investments because it had to pay off a specific loan. I didn't want to be in the situation where three or four years from repayment a stock market crash wiped out the savings. A with-profit endowment smooths out the returns and is a good balance with a Pep. I also have a Maximum Investment Plan, which will give me a tax-free sum when it matures. Setting up a pension mortgage is unnecessary but it was my personal view. You pay back the mortgage sooner but have less in your retirement."

Although Mr Bowes is safe he is disappointed on behalf of savers who have put more than £50,000 into Peps and Tessas.

GAVIN LUMSDEN

Hold on to those Tessas and Peps

Marianne Curphey looks at the options for those with more than £50,000 in tax-free investments

Financial advisers and tax accountants will be among the beneficiaries of the new individual savings account schemes as the estimated 450,000 people who have more than £50,000 in equity-based investments seek advice on other tax-efficient homes for their money.

Most IFAs are advising clients to hold their Pep and Tessa funds, even those who have more than the £50,000 Isa limit. They are also recommending investors continue to put money into Pep plans to make the most of the tax-free income and growth until Isas are introduced in April 1999. Here Weekend Money looks at the options available.

Q **I have never invested in a Pep. Is this the right time do so?**

A IFAs are reticent about recommending a product that is about to be scrapped, but most agree that there are almost 15 months of tax-free growth available to investors who buy a Pep now. Most Pep providers are likely to provide Isas as well and should allow you to switch your Pep investment into an Isa.

Q ***I have been investing in Peps but am nowhere near* the £50,000 limit. Is it a good idea to continue contributing?**

A For those people who contribute on a monthly basis, there is no reason to stop, according to Mike Owen of Plan Invest. "Peps are a relatively low-cost investment product and the advantage of continuing is that your fund can grow tax-free between now and April 1999." He also recommends that people who have not used up this year's Pep allowance should do so before next April. All financial advisers recommended people continue to hold their Peps.

Q **I have more than £50,000 in Peps and I am worried about what will happen to my investments under the new regime. What can I do in advance?**

A There may be up to 750,000 people in this position, some of whom could have a fund of more than £150,000 built up in the ten years since Peps were introduced. Both Mr Owen and Tim Cockerill, a director of the Bristol-based IFA Whitechurch Securities, believe people whose investments are higher than the Isa limit should continue to hold onto their funds.

Q ***We are a married couple* with £100,000 in Peps between us. Are we allowed to put £50,0000 each into an Isa?**

A Yes. Mr Cockerill recommends that if the husband holds £100,000 worth of Peps and the wife few investments, the husband should sell half of the holding, transfer the proceeds into his wife's name (such transfers do not attract tax) and then use up her Isa allowance.

Q **What are the capital gains tax implications of Isa?**

A UK investors who do not put their money in a tax-efficient investment have to pay income tax at their highest rate on dividends from bonds and shares, and capital gains tax (CGT) on any appreciation in the underlying value of the fund when *they sell it*. There is an annual CGT exemption of £6,500.

The appeal of Peps is that you pay no income tax or CGT on the investments within the Pep. All investments within Peps will be rebased to their value at October 6, 1999, for CGT purposes. According to Mr Cockerill, this means that when investors come to sell their stocks, they may not have to pay CGT on the gains.

Q **How will that work in practice?**

A If you have not transferred your Pep into an Isa by October 5, 1999, then any growth in the fund after then will be liable for CGT, minus your annual exemption. The answer, he says, is to make use of "good old-fashioned tax planning". This includes "bed and breakfasting" when you sell your holdings at the end of the tax year to make use of the CGT allowances, and then buy them back the next day.

Q **So what are the alternatives to the Isa scheme?**

A Paul Freeman, tax specialist with Coopers & Lybrand, the firm of accountants, said investors who held large sums in Peps but who did not need income from their investments could switch to a UK-based unit trust that did not pay any income, thereby avoiding income tax on dividends. If they held the trust indefinitely, they would not have to pay CGT either.

Ian Milward, of Chase de Vere, says that tax avoidance should not be your first priority and that investment trusts and unit trusts are sensible vehicles for long-term savers. He added: "Pick low-yielding but high growth stocks which mean that you pay very little tax on the dividends."

Q **Are there any other options for people with substantial Pep holdings?**

A For the very wealthy, there is the option to take your money offshore. Schemes known as roll-up funds and investment bonds allow people to defer paying tax until a later date, for example, when they have retired and are paying a lower rate of tax, or in a year when their earnings are lower than usual.

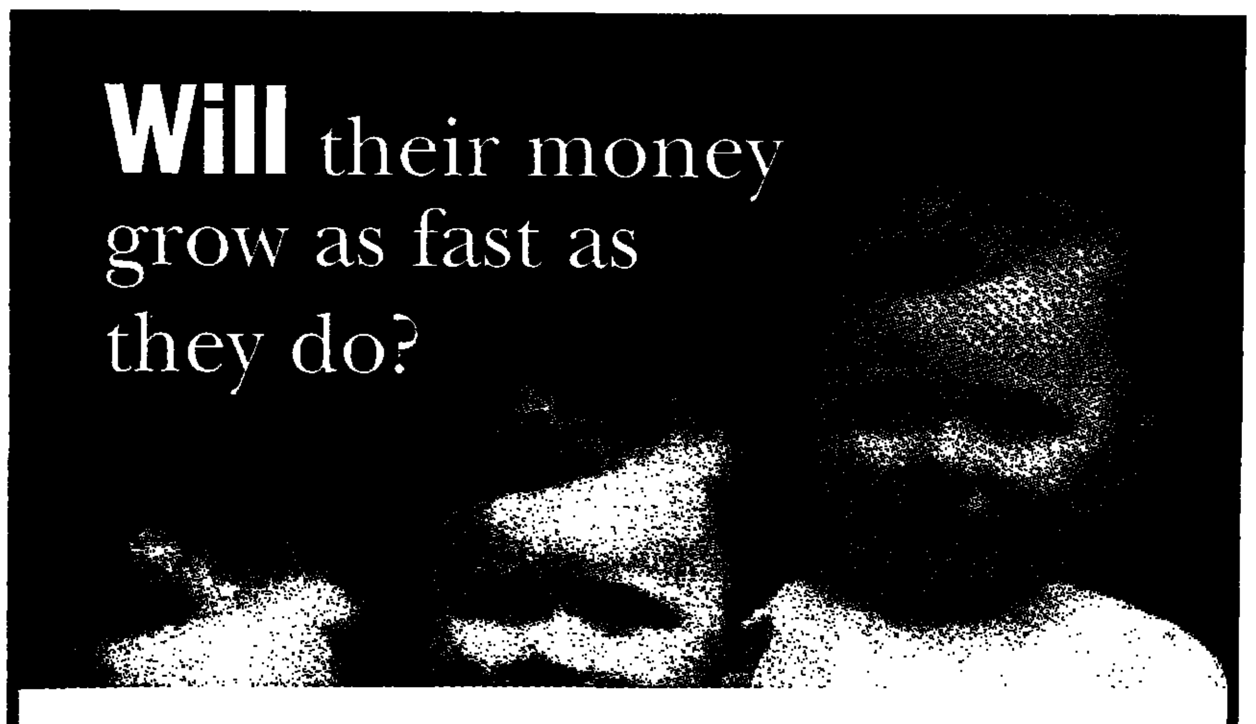
All gains within offshore investment bonds *roll up* free of tax and investments can be bought and sold within the bond without incurring a CGT liability. Under current law, *UK investors* can also withdraw up to 5 per cent of their original investment without paying tax.

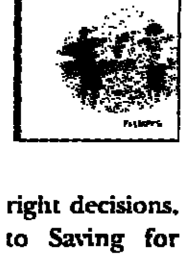
However, the drawback is that there may be a very different tax regime in place in the years to come. Another potential problem is that charges on these bonds can be heavy. Also, these schemes are known to tax accountants as tax avoidance and although they are legal, the Government is thought to be keen on scrapping them.

Q **What about changing my domicile for tax purposes?**

A Another option is to retire to a tax haven and become domiciled for tax purposes on an island such as Jersey, the Cayman Islands, the Virgin Islands or Bermuda, where income tax and CGT are lower than in the UK. This is a radical step, since to qualify as being domiciled overseas you need to have spent at least a year outside the UK.

If you are an ordinary investor and open a savings account in Jersey and are resident in the UK, the law requires you to declare the money you earn overseas on your tax form and pay tax on it.





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Taking the offshore option

Gavin Lumsden looks at the most effective way to prevent the taxman from getting at your investments

In retrospect it was entirely appropriate that the Government chose Geoffrey Robinson, the multimillionaire Paymaster General, to introduce the individual savings account this week. The Isa's £50,000 lifetime limit on contributions leaves up to 500,000 savers wondering what to do with their "excess" investments, which will no longer enjoy tax relief from 1999.

However, the helpful Mr Robinson has already shown the way — take the money offshore. The Labour MP and businessman was acutely embarrassed earlier in the week by revelations that he holds £12 million in offshore trusts despite explicit warnings from Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, that he will not tolerate millionaires avoiding tax in offshore havens.

But in spite of the Chancellor's moral rhetoric there is a range of offshore options available to ordinary savers. Here we explain them.

HAVENS

AN OFFSHORE haven is a place where taxation has been set at deliberately low or nonexistent levels to attract savings from countries with less generous fiscal regimes. Many of the world's tax havens are small islands with few natural resources that have turned to financial services to generate a modern economy.

However, one of the largest centres is the landlocked city state of Luxembourg. The Isle of Man, the Channel Islands and Dublin are the most commonly used offshore centres by UK residents for tax planning purposes. Money in a bank, fund or trust registered in one of these centres can grow free of tax. Of course, it is taxed when brought back to the UK, but at that point the investor may be on a lower tax rate.

WHY WAIT?

WHAT am I waiting for? Putting your money offshore is not for everyone. Basic-rate taxpayers may find the extra paperwork outweighs the benefits. Those people most likely to reap a reward are non-taxpayers and, of course, those paying the higher rate of 40 per cent. It is no coincidence that offshore investing has a millionaire-friendly image. Minimum levels of investment in offshore funds, for instance, can be as high as £15,000. Expenses and management charges are higher too.

NON-TAXPAYERS

WHAT is in it for the non-taxpayers? Some investment products, such as bonds issued by insurance companies, pay 23 per cent tax on their underlying investments in the UK. As non-taxpayers cannot reclaim this they are better off buying the bond offshore, where it is exempt from taxation.

BONDS

INSURANCE bonds are the backbone of the offshore industry. They are simply wrappers around investments in much the same way as a Pep is, or an Isa will be. Assets held within a bond can grow almost entirely tax-free (there are a few exceptions where tax on dividends cannot be reclaimed).

In addition, investors can withdraw 5 per cent of their money each year, free of tax. Investors can save up this allowance and withdraw 15 per cent after three years, for example. However, the Inland Revenue is keen to reform this aspect.

Insurance bonds are not to be confused with the completely different kind of bonds issued by companies looking to increase their borrowings without going to the bank. Those bonds pay a fixed level of interest and are traded on the stock market. At the moment insurance bonds only take lump sum investments, although there are plans by some insurers to accept regular premiums, which should broaden their appeal.

There are two types of bonds. The simplest is a life bond, which holds the funds run by the life insurance company. However, you can also use a bond as an administrative vehicle to hold a much wider range of onshore and offshore funds from different management companies. For instance, it will be possible for investors to put unit trusts from companies such as Perpetual, Fidelity and Jupiter, which are currently in Peps, into offshore bonds when Peps are scrapped.

Insurers charge between 1.5 per cent and 2 per cent of the funds under management for the bond wrapper, so do your sums first. Shop around because some insurers will often offer discounts to individual fund managers. You can put shares into a bond but if you do the Inland Revenue will consider it to be "highly personalised" and will force you to pay tax on everything the bond holds. This also rules out investment trusts.

The best thing about offshore bonds, though, is that you can avoid having to make a declaration on your self-assessment form. Ordinarily income received from unit trusts and shares and interest from bank and building society accounts has to be declared to the taxman. In a bond there is nothing to declare until you withdraw the money.

PETER JORDAN

Team Treasury: from left, Geoffrey Robinson with Helen Liddell, Gordon Brown, Dawn Primarolo and Alistair Darling

OTHER FUNDS

WHAT other funds are there? By going offshore, investors can choose the European equivalents to the unit trust, called Ucits or Sicav. Many of these are run by familiar onshore fund managers and are listed daily in the financial pages. There are two types, roll-up (or non-distributor) and distributor funds. Roll-up funds do not pay dividends, therefore are not suitable if you need an income. However, all the capital and income produced by your investment grows entirely tax-free until you withdraw it, when it is liable to income tax.

Distributor funds pay a gross dividend on which UK residents have to pay income tax. However, higher-rate earners may still find the tax-free income useful because they can choose when to pay the tax. Alternatively, you can put the funds in a bond and, provided the income is less than .5 per cent, take the dividend tax-free. As with buying a unit trust it is important to look at the performance record and charges of the fund manager.

TRUSTS

THESE are a way for individuals to transfer the legal ownership and tax liability of an asset while dictating who receives the benefit from it. They are often used in inheritance tax planning, although there are specialist accumulation and growth trusts for children's education. For instance, parents can shelter money in a probate trust so that it goes to their children when they die. However, the money will become part of their estate and will be taxed.

To avoid this another option is to set up a gift trust, which is effectively a living will. If the gift trust is set up seven years before the parent dies there is no tax to pay. Offshore insurance companies will offer template trusts for you to buy off the shelf although you should check with a solicitor first.

Trustee services start at around £150 a year. If you are expecting to draw on the trust before your death you may need a more complicated and expensive arrangement. These can cost thousands of pounds to establish and maintain, and the advice of a professional adviser, such as an accountant, is essential. A neat twist to trusts is the dead settlor rule. This enables beneficiaries of a trust to receive any income from the trust tax-free after the death of the person who established the trust. Again, the taxman has this on his hitlist.

DANGERS

THERE are two dangers to the offshore investor: scandal and the taxman. Fortunately, despite some shady customers, offshore centres put a high premium on investor protection. Nevertheless, you might be best sticking with well-known companies with offices on the mainland. The Isle of Man, for instance, has an investor protection scheme which will reimburse 90 per cent of your money if a bank or insurance company goes bust.

The UK, by contrast, sets a £48,000 limit on its insurance scheme. Guernsey, where Mr Robinson has his millions, is less secure. It offers no protection for holders of trusts, bonds or bank deposits, but it will offer up to £60,000 compensation to investors in funds.

The taxman is a different matter. Five per cent withdrawal and dead settlor probably have a limited lifespan. However, there is little the Chancellor can do to limit the tax efficiency of offshore bonds because they comply with European law.

Life companies have been left in the dark

The UK's biggest life and pensions providers have admitted that they are still unclear how the life insurance element of individual savings accounts (Isas) will work.

Under the proposals outlined this week the Government said that it is keen to include a life insurance component in the Isa to help people to combine an element of protection with their savings.

This type of policy would pay out a lump sum if you died, but it also acts as a long-term savings plan. However, Standard Life, the biggest name in UK life and pensions, said it is still mystified by the Isa's proposed structure. Of the £5,000 annual contribution limit, £1,000 can be placed into a life insurance policy issued by insurance companies or friendly societies. Some commentators have suggested that this has been offered as a sop to keep the life insurance industry happy.

Andrew Black, marketing manager at Standard Life, says details are still unclear. "Under the terms of the Isa, you are allowed to place your investment with a new manager every year, in the way you currently can with a personal equity plan. However, life insurance policies are intended to be placed with a provider and contributions added over many years. We are not sure how this squares with the idea of regularly switching managers."

Standard Life is not one of the insurance companies which charges high upfront commission and ongoing fees for its products. Nevertheless, the other element the Government needs to address in drawing up firm plans for the Isa is the high start-up charges and ongoing commission levied by some insurance companies on their life products.

Unless the Government imposes a standard tariff of charges, which is unlikely, investors will have to look carefully at the costs of having the life insurance element of their Isa managed by the different companies, and then try to choose one with moderate fees and a good track record.

Legal & General has announced that investors will be able to transfer existing L&G Peps into their Isas or those of rivals without charge. Other insurance companies are likely to be less generous if you transfer your Pep to a rival, and may levy exit fees.

MARIANNE CURPHEY

Tessa still has her admirers

Tessa will be a very popular girl this Christmas. Although about 4.5 million people are currently saving in tax-exempt special savings accounts (Tessas), many more will now resolve to use their allowance.

While Tessas will no longer be on sale from April 1999, Tessa holders will be able to continue to pay into their accounts until they mature and then move the capital (a maximum of £9,000) into an individual savings account (Isa). The interest accumulated in the account cannot be transferred. When a transfer is made it counts towards the £50,000 lifetime limit on Isa contributions.

The Tessa rules are simple. You can save up to £9,000 over a five-year period, contributing a maximum of £3,000 in the first year, £1,800 in the second, £1,800 in the third, £1,800 in the fourth and £600 in the final year. A grand total of £26 billion is now deposited in these accounts. But the Government believes that Tessa is not appealing to the low-paid because anyone touching their capital during the five-year period loses the right to tax-free interest.

Labour ministers believe Tessa is the darling of the middle classes, who can afford to take a long-term view. They believe that those on low incomes will only learn to be thrifty if they can have instant access to their cash.

Isa's fans will be able to save just £1,000 a year in cash, well below the Tessa annual limits. David Oliver, partner at Arthur Andersen, the accountants, believes that this rule indicates a desire to see people saving long term in stocks and shares. He said: "The clear message is that cash is not the right vehicle for long-term savings."

Despite the penalties, many people already use Tessas as instant access accounts. They are prepared to pay the tax on the interest because Tessas rates are higher than average, particularly on low balances. Elspeth May, partner at KPMG, the accountants, says everyone should have a Tessa because the rates are usually good. "If you have to close the account and pay the tax, then you are still better off."

If you have less than £100 to invest in a Tessa, you can earn 7 per cent at the Halifax, 6.55 per cent at Abbey National and 7.50 per cent at Midland (best buys, see page 60).

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A savings account: not just for Christmas

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WEEKEND MONEY is edited by Anne Ashworth

Caroline Merrell on the individual savings account, and Peps and Tessas

What does Isa mean to me?

The launch of a new savings scheme is not usually the stuff of front page headlines. But the publication of a consultation document detailing the new individual savings account (Isa), Labour's tax-free answer to the problem of low saving among the populace, raised a rumpus. The Pep and the Tessa, the two Tory-devised schemes that will be replaced by the Isa, have never achieved such celebrity (Anne Ashworth writes).

The proposals were called an attack on the prudent and thrifty of Middle Britain. At first, it appeared that 750,000 people would be adversely affected, being prevented from transferring Pep holdings of more than £50,000 into an Isa. A swift correction followed. It was claimed that the measure would hit only 350,000 to 500,000 people. However, this figure cannot be substantiated, as it is now clear that there are no entirely reliable statistics on how much is held in Peps and Tessas, or on the numbers of investors.

But Geoffrey Robinson, the multimillionaire Paymaster General who has assumed special responsibility for the account, believes that they are mostly the undeserving rich from socio-economic groups A and B.

The £50,000 limit has angered thousands of the prudent of all classes who have been using Peps to supplement their pension savings. The imposition of this arbitrary ceiling has found no supporters.

Jason Hollands, of BESt Investment, a firm of advisers specialising in Peps, said that many of those who had contacted him had holdings below the £50,000 maximum but had hoped to build up funds above this limit. Mr Hollands said: "They are teachers, local government workers and the like who do not wish to rely on the State in their old age. Most told me they had voted Labour."

Another source of grievance is the abrupt change in the rules. Those who had embarked on saving in Peps and Tessas feel that they have been misled. Elspeth May, partner at KPMG, said: "What guarantee is there that they will not change the rules again? How confident are people going to be about opening an Isa in the light of this about-turn?"

In this Weekend Money special, we explain what the Isa proposals mean for your financial future. We also tell you how to follow Mr Robinson's example and ensure that all savings above £50,000 can be made tax-free by going offshore. Write to us if you too want to take part in the consultation procedure.

Access is key for teacher

Jake Newton is not too concerned about the lifetime limit

The idea of an individual savings account (Isa) appeals to Jake Newton, a 27-year-old biology teacher at a secondary school in Wakefield, West Yorkshire.

He has some savings in a Sainsbury's Bank account, which is currently paying 6.5 per cent on balances of £1 or more, but does not have any personal equity plans or Tessas. He automatically contributes to a pension scheme.

Mr Newton has his own flat, on which he paid a 5 per cent deposit, and with a salary of £20,500 his main expenses are his mortgage and the running of his car.

He said: "I am not too concerned about the £50,000 lifetime contribution limit for the Isa because to me right now £50,000 seems a lot of money.

"I do like the idea that you can hold cash in the account and can withdraw it without having to give notice. That means that if something goes wrong with the car I can get my hands on the money quickly."

MARIANNE CURPHEY

Weekend Money has been inundated by calls from readers puzzled and annoyed by the Government's plans for the individual savings account, which were unveiled this week.

Under the scheme, tax exempt special savings accounts (Tessas) and personal equity plans (Peps) will cease to be sold from April 1999. Instead, the Government has decided to offer savers the Isa, a tax-free savings account, which has different limits from Peps and Tessas. Here, *The Times* tries to answer some questions about the Isa. However, readers should note that Isa proposals are by no means final. The Government is planning to consult on details of the scheme. In particular, transitional arrangements for investors with existing Tessas and Peps will have to be hammered out.

Q What is an individual savings account?

A Under the terms of the Isa, which will be available from April, 1999, individuals will be able save a total of £5,000 a year, up to a maximum contribution limit of £50,000 in the new account. Any income earned on the Isa, and any capital gains will be free of tax — just as with Peps. Unlike Tessas, in which savings are locked in for five years, investors will be able to access their Isa savings at any time. At first sight, the tax-free limits are far less generous than those for Peps and Tessas. At the moment, individuals can save up to £9,000 year in Peps, plus a total of £9,000 over a five-year period in a Tessa. There is no overall cap on contributions.

Q Why has the Government decided to introduce the Isa?

A The Government said that it wanted to encourage the savings habit among that half of the adult population with no savings at all. It felt that Peps had become a tax shelter for the rich. However, on closer examination, the Government's own figures show that it is merely hoping to share the current amount of tax relief given on Tessas and Peps among more people. So, some of those with Peps and Tessas will lose tax relief on investments they already have.

Q What can the £5,000 a year be invested in?

A The £5,000 annual amount can be held in cash, stocks and shares, including investment trusts and unit trusts, and life insurance products, such as endowment savings contracts. These latter policies have been brought into disrepute in recent years because of high charges used to pay their sellers. Such charges severely hamper the products' performance.

There is a £1,000 limit on the amount that can be held in cash, and a £1,000 limit on annual contributions into life insurance products. Strangely for an account meant to encourage poorer people to save, the entire £5,000 can be put into stocks and shares and unit trusts and investment trusts — a higher-risk alternative to cash. Unlike Peps, Isas will be able to invest in shares of companies quoted on any recognised stock exchange in the world. This will, for example, include shares on Nasdaq, the US market dominated by high-risk, high-tech companies. Again, this is not likely to appeal to poorer savers, who will be averse to risk. The Government is offering a 10 per cent credit on UK dividends, which should encourage investment in UK companies — the original purpose of Peps. However, according to Hill Samuel, the bank, this tax credit will be worth only about £20 a year on an average investment in a unit trust.

Q Who will be able to offer the accounts?

A Isas will be offered by banks, building societies, life insurance companies, and investment management companies — organisations that at present offer Peps and Tessas. The Government also wants organisations having greater contact with the low-paid to offer Isas; these would include supermarkets and credit unions. Sainsbury and Tesco already offer banking services. Savers will be able to take out one Isa a year. As with Peps, they will be able to change Isa providers each year. The Treasury claims that savers will be able to transfer Isas to another provider, if the performance of the product is poor. However, under the present proposals, the whole Isa has to be transferred. It is not possible to transfer only the poorly performing portion.

Q How will existing Peps and Tessas be treated under the Isa?

A Around £58 billion is held in Peps and £26 billion in Tessas. About 2.5 million people have Peps and 4.5 million have Tessas. Investments held in Peps and Tessas will be able to be rolled over into Isas, subject to a maximum fund limit of £50,000. If you like, the total rolled-over fund, not the amount that has been contributed, counts as a new contribution. It will, therefore, be deducted from the total contribution limit of £50,000. The Government expects savers to keep their existing products, and that they will simply be held within an Isa wrapper. The Treasury claims that people having Peps with different providers will not need to transfer the holdings to one Isa provider. For example, a saver with £8,000 in an M&G Pep and £8,000 in a Perpetual Pep will be able to leave these investments where they are. They can use their remaining £34,000 below the contribution limit with another Isa provider if they like. Tessas will cease to be opened from April, 1999. However, people taking them out before then will be able to run them to maturity. After maturity, £9,000 of the proceeds can be put in an Isa — again subject to the overall £50,000 limit.

Q What if I have more than £50,000 in my entire Pep and Tessa holdings?

A This is the most contentious point of the proposals. The Government seems unable to decide how many people have more than £50,000 in Peps and Tessas. Figures of between 300,000 and 750,000 have been quoted by government sources. As Tessas are to be allowed to run their term, the £50,000 limit has most impact on Pep holders. Pep holdings exceeding £50,000 on October 6, 1999 (the Government is giving a six-month adjustment period) will be affected. Holdings above that sum become subject to capital gains tax and income tax. Tax will be calculated from the October date. The Treasury does not expect a big sell-off of funds because investors can continue to hold the investments, although they will become taxable.

Q What happens if I have a Pep mortgage?

A It has become common for Peps to be used to pay off loans. According to Halifax, the Isa could simply replace the Pep as a way to pay off a mortgage. People with Pep mortgages will be able to roll over their Peps into the Isa. The funds will continue to grow tax-free within the Isa.

Q How do I transfer my current investments?

A The paper issued by the Inland Revenue this week is for consultation purposes only. Details of transferring investments have yet to be worked out. The Government does not want to see the industry imposing high charges for changing Peps and Tessas into Isas.

Q Who will lose and who will gain with Isas?

A The biggest losers under the new savings plans will be people with more than £50,000 sheltered in Peps. They will have to find a way of dealing with the excess before October 1999. As each individual is allowed a £50,000 limit, there may a case for transferring investments between spouses. Bob Rothenberg, of Blick Rothenberg, the accountancy firm, said that changes could mean an extra £1,400 a year in tax for an investor with £120,000 saved. He explained: "Say that he transfers the £50,000 maximum into an Isa, leaving him with £70,000. If he invests this for a return of 5 per cent, this would give him £3,500 in income. The tax bill on this would be £1,400."

Many in the financial services industry believe that there will be no winners under the new scheme. They do not believe that it will encourage the 20 million people with no savings at all to take up the habit.

More Isa details, pages 62, 63

Lifetime limit deters analyst

Tim Eastwood intends to switch some of his investments into National Savings or Premium Bonds for tax reasons

Working for a bank means Tim Eastwood took a careful look at the Government's new proposals to encourage savings.

At 28, and with five years' service at Barclays Bank behind him, Mr Eastwood has a Tessa but no personal equity plan. However, he is concerned that in the future he will have saved up more than the £50,000 Isa tax-free lifetime limit, and believes he will have to find other ways to invest tax-efficiently.

He moved to Cardiff three months ago where he works as a risk analyst, dealing with insolvency issues, particularly with regard to commercial property.

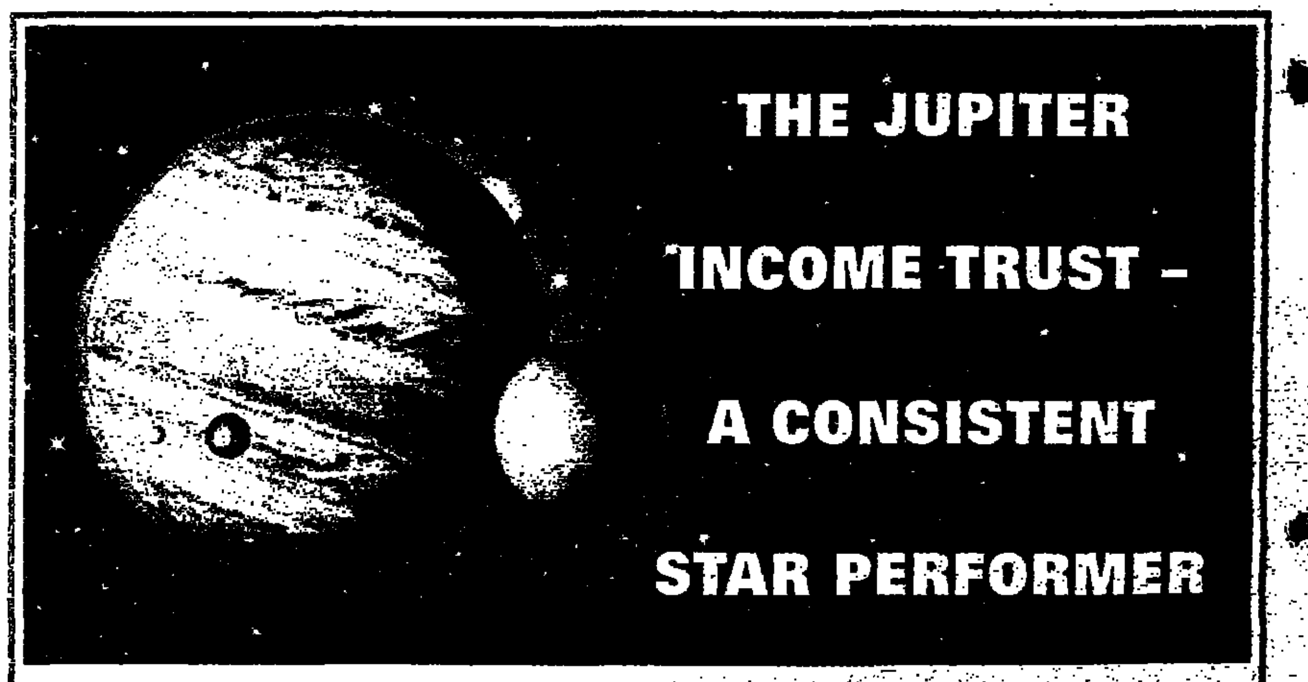
He is renting at present but thinks he may buy a house in the next six months when he is familiar with the city.

"I am disappointed that the upper limit on the amount of money you can put in an Isa has been capped," he said.

"I would have liked to have been able to hold more than £1,000 in cash in the Isa and because there is no notice period on the account I worry that the interest rate paid on balances will not be particularly high."

He intends to switch some of his investments into National Savings Certificates or Premium Bonds to make them more tax-efficient and says that the problem with having no notice period on the savings account is that people will have to be very disciplined not to dip into their cash fund.

MARIANNE CURPHEY



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